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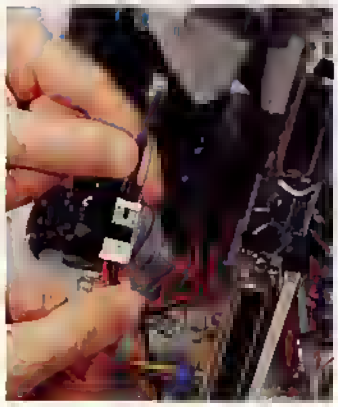

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90 COMPETITION!

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Abandoning the PCW's native printer for a different model is all very well – but how can you get the best out of your new purchase? We take a look at five popular external printers – and see just how well they meet the PCW challenge

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45 INNER SECRETS
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If your PCW breaks down, help is at hand – and it might be closer to home than you think. Turn to our directory of the nation's PCW repairers and find out if there's one near you!

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SCA Systems have released a brand new performance booster for the PCW8256. Karen Donaghay puts it through its paces

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How do you use a thesaurus – on your PCW? Wicked wordsmith Martin Le Poidevin finds out

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Sophie Lankenau - Editor

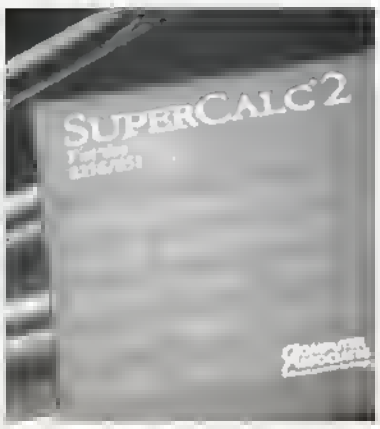
Welcome to this month's 8000 Plus! We've been fairly swamped by printers this month, as you may have gathered from the cover. You have to have quite a huge desk to accommodate some of the larger models; but that, as your letters have indicated, is the least of your worries. External printers are becoming increasingly popular among PCW owners – especially those of you who are interested in DTP. But all too often, the excitement of trying out a new printer is quashed by a complete lack of operating instructions. Fear not; this month's round-up of some of the more popular models aims to clear up some of those tricky problems involved in persuading a printer to behave itself when asked to carry out seemingly simple tasks. So, if you're having difficulties, turn to page 10 for some instant solutions!

8000 Plus has rather a bias towards the 8256 this month. The machine is reportedly selling better than ever before at the moment, and the industry is coming out in support of that fact. We've been delighted to review SCA Systems' clip-on performance booster for the machine, Pro8256. Not only does it equip your PCW with some very welcome extra memory, it also brings extra flexibility to the machine with its dual port. We're also showing you how to install an internal 3.5" drive to the 8256 on page 45; if you choose to invest in both this and SCA's product, you're well on the way to having a truly turbo-charged PCW!

Now we realise that internal drives are costly additions to the machine; technology, for all its appeal, rarely comes cheaply enough to make it an imperative investment. So, we are pleased to offer you the chance to acquire a drive free of charge – in this month's competition. Turn to page 90 and make sure that you're in with a chance to win! But first, let's get down to a jam-packed July issue!

TOGETHER AT LAST

LocoFile and Supercalc 2 join forces in new software promotion



These two programs are united in a new Dixons promotion. The familiar face of LocoFile remains unchanged. Supercalc2 on the other hand sports a new design to mark the occasion

Two leading programs for the PCW are being united in our local high street. You can now walk into any branch of electrical retailers Dixons and pick up both LocoFile and Supercalc 2 in one bundle.

This meeting of the two giants could transform the image of the PCW. LocoFile is a best-selling database and Supercalc is a leader in the spreadsheet market. Together they could kill the misconception that the PCW is 'just a word processor'.

The reasoning behind the move is that the trio of word processor, database and spreadsheet are seen as the vital components of a business system. A spreadsheet can help with the economics, a database can change the way that you keep information and a word processor replaces the typewriter.

While Locomotive are famous for LocoScript and (to a lesser extent) for their database LocoFile, they have never developed a PCW spreadsheet. The alliance with Computer Associates, who produce Supercalc 2, is one way to present a complete solution to the buyer. Dixons are backing the move with a massive promotion of the package.

"We make a good team", said Jane Dagnell from Locomotive Software. "The Dixons promotion adds database and spreadsheet capabilities to the PCW for a highly competitive price."

Persuasion tactics include rolling demonstrations in every Dixons branch and access to Dixons support service which gives advice over the telephone.

"We felt that it was essential for the customer to have quick and easy access to someone who could put them on the right course," said Neil MacDonald from Dixons. The service is provided via an '0898' number, charged at 45p a minute.

The price of this double decker pack is £79 excluding VAT (or £89 for those who need to upgrade to LocoScript 2). Separately LocoFile and Supercalc2 would cost £93.90. The package will be widely distributed through Dixons and other computer shops throughout the UK.

by Karen Donaghay

THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

Asian languages such as Gujerati or Bengali are often ignored in the computer world. Few word processors and desk top publishing packages account for the fact that English is not the only language spoken in this country.

Now there is a new guide that should point out exactly what is available. It is called "Computers and Asian Languages" and is written by Richard Raby. The report covers programs for a range of machines including the PC, the BBC, the Atari and, of course, the PCW.

The report can be obtained from Richard Raby, Oric, 7-8 Commercial Road, Oldham, OL1 1DP or by calling (061) 6264130. The price is £10 to individuals and community groups and £20 to local authority departments and institutions.

MICE WORK

Creative Technology are hard at work on their l DTP-related product - a revolutionary mouse for PCW. CT say that KeyMouse (for that is what it i called), will provide a "quantum leap in quality".

In a major departure from the traditional rodent design, KeyMouse will be attached directly to the PCW keyboard. (All existing mice on the market are attached to the expansion port at the back of the machine.)

It will also offer a higher resolution than its competitors, and the mouse can react to hand speed. So, if you move the mouse very quickly over an inch of the table it will move a long way across the screen. Move the mouse very slowly over an inch of the table the cursor moves less distance. This gives the user a choice between fast work and finer, more delicate work.

They also plan to include "upgrade versions of MicroDesign 2 and ProScan' in the package. The upgrades are needed to make the two programs compatible with the new mouse. A prototype is the popular Naksha mouse for the Atari ST but KeyMouse will have its own distinctive logo. One word of warning. CT have pointed out that the launch of the new mouse is not imminent, but hope to have it on the streets before the Autumn.

Take one Naksha mouse, add another button plus the KeyMouse logo and you have a fair idea of what the new mouse will look like

Big mistake

If any of you were confused or frustrated by John Eade's listing in May's Tipoffs, which enabled you to produce large characters on the 9512, you had good reason. There were one or two errors therein. The truth will be revealed if you send an sae marked 'Big Text listing' to 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. We'll despatch a printed copy of the (correct) original in return.

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OH BROTHER!

Brother have just announced the addition of two new ink jet printers to their range. This comes as no surprise at a time when ink jets are gaining a reputation for good value and high-quality results.

The new printers are called the the HJ-770 and the HJ-100 and while one is destined for the office the other would be just as suitable to take on the road.

The HJ-770 is the bulkier of the two. It can handle paper as large as A3, making it a good choice for spreadsheet users. On the other hand, the HJ-100 is a portable printer that Brother say is "no bigger than a sheet of A4 paper."

The benefits of both are common to all ink jet printers. They are almost silent, the quality is excellent and they are fast. This makes them a good substitute for the more expensive laser printer. An added bonus is that both printers can cope with continuous stationery.

Other features include a range of possible printer emulations. These include the IBM ProPrinter and the Epson LQ1050 making it a safe bet for the PCW user. The HJ-770 boasts a variety of fonts while the portable HJ-100 has a NiCad battery which will allow you to print 40 pages before it needs recharging.

The recommended price for the two printers is £749 for the HJ-770 and £345 for the HJ-100.

For more details, contact Brother Business Machines on (061) 3306531.

Brother's entry into the ink jet market has produced this neat, portable printer for £345

SING ALONG WITH PHIL

If you want to produce legible and professional music scores then Phil Shapiro could have the answer. He is a musician who uses The Composers' Pen in his daily work routine: arranging and transcribing music for people who lack the know-how themselves. Now he wants to pass on his expertise.

"I am training people to use Composer's Pen to the full, especially where it needs to be integrated with MicroDesign and LocoScript 2," Phil explained. He is certainly no stranger to the teaching discipline and also runs a music correspondence course called "The Shapiro Method".

By extending his teaching repertoire to include The Composer's Pen, Phil hopes to reveal many more tricks of the music trade to his students.

Tuition costs £10 an hour for those in the Birmingham area, plus a fee for travelling expenses. For more details contact Phil on (021) 7476675.

Phil is one musician who is just as comfortable sitting at his PCW as he is at the piano. He now offers tuition for Composit's Composer's Pen

ON THE BALL

Many cricket fans like to keep track of their favourite players and often spend many a frustrating hour trying to remember exactly what happened in a Test Match that took place five years ago. Now, a new program called High Score can help by keeping a record on the PCW.

High Score can tot up runs for your local club or for the England team alike. It can analyse the performance of any member of a team or produce a summary of the team effort. Details like batting averages, bowling averages and the highest score are all calculated: the user merely enters the original scores when they occur.

High Score could be used by the classic armchair sportsman. It could be also be invaluable to the local pavilion, taking the hard work out of choosing the openers and spinners for that next all-important match.

The program is written in Pascal rather than Basic making it fast to use. And, at the end of the day, the results can be loaded into a LocoScript document for inclusion in, say, a club report, or printed out directly.

To order the program, or to obtain more details, contact Sticky Dog Software, 46 Avondale Road, Bath, Avon, BA1 3EG. High Score costs £20.95 (including VAT) and comes with full user instructions.

DOUBLE DUTCH

We've had some fairly stodgy press releases in our time but one which arrived on the news desk this month really takes the biscuit. Voltmace undoubtedly have a great little product going for them but *this* is what they have to say about one of their new drives.

"You almost need a pilot's licence for this one." Well, there's an encouraging start! But then it goes on. "By using three switches you can use the computer as two internal 3' drives, or as drive A 3.5' and drive B 3' or drive B 3.5" and drive A 3'. You can copy a 3' A disc to 3.5" or vice versa or copy a 3" B disc to 3.5' or vice versa."

Er, can you run that one by us one more time, please?

Actually, what they really mean is that this is a 3.5' disc external drive that can mimic either the B drive on your PCW or the A drive. You can chop and change at will by flicking a small switch.

Incidentally the 3.5" drive can even be used to boot up the machine: quite an achievement for the PCW.

The drive costs £110.00 (including VAT) when added to a single drive machine or £120.00 when added to a dual drive machine. For more details, contact Voltmace on (0462) 894410. We assure you that their spoken word is crystal clear!

The new disc drive from Voltmace just can't make its mind up. Is it an A drive or is it a B drive?

Dead ringer

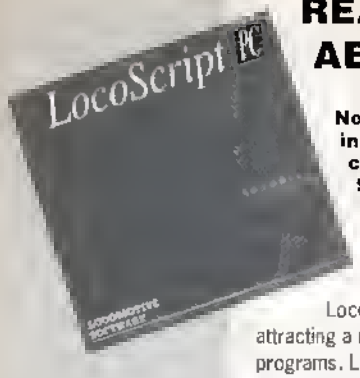
Ansible Information, the company who are best known for the Indexing utility Ansible Index, have just set up a new product support service. You can send your technical queries via fax to the number (0734) 669914. Another recent change is the company's telephone number. For details of products and prices, you now need to telephone (0424) 719739.

Flippin' magic

We keep hearing that the lines to the Software Imperative mansion are constantly busy. The good news is that they haven't left the country, but are floundering under a mountain of requests for Flipper 3. Fortunately, the backlog is slowly diminishing. But a word of advice..if you want to get your upgrade quickly don't forget to state which type of machine you are using; many of you have omitted to do so, and this is partly responsible for the current delays.

Off the record

The Album System, reviewed in June 1991's 8000 Plus, is now available on all PCWs. Club 29 Computer Services, who produce the program wish to point out that the program only requires one disc to run the program - this point has been cleared up in later editions of the manual. A second disc drive is useful for saving large databases but by no means essential. More details are available on (0734) 77448



READ ALL ABOUT IT

Now all documents created in LocoScript PC can be catalogued using Festival Software Services' program, Lindex PC

LocoScript PC is already attracting a number of complimentary programs. Lindex PC is one of the first, and provides a catalogue of Loco PC files.

It is faithful to its PCW origins: a program known as Super-Lindex. Basically both versions can produce a list of LocoScript files, including the short description known as the Identity Text.

Lindex PC can narrow down the search for files in all sorts of ways: by name, directory, the date of creation and so on. From this list a LocoFile database can be made. Because this includes three lines of Identity Text this can allow for some fairly complex searches and could mark the end of the lost files forever. Lindex PC costs £29.95, from Festival Software Services on (0274) 613300

COMPOSE YOURSELF

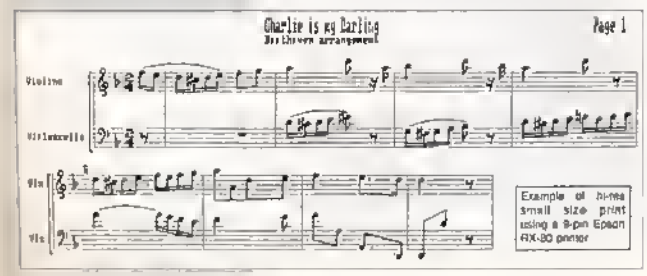
Musicians and computers can work hand in hand - as a Composit's Composers Pen has proved. It is a favourite with many tuneful PCW owners, from the budding songster to the local choir master, and is used to write musical scores on the PCW.

Now Composit Software have released a new version of the program for the PC. Called (not surprisingly), Composer's Pen PC, it allows you to exercise your musical prowess on the PCW's elder cousin.

Little has changed in the PC version. Most of the improvements affect the cosmetics of the program rather than the way it is used. For instance, phrases and ties are curved on-screen as well as in the printout. A breve can now be included as the longest note available and song words are easier to introduce.

To make it more appealing to the PCW owner the company are offering a special deal. Those who have the original PCW version of Composers Pen can buy the new PC version for £117.50 (including VAT) for a limited period. Others have to pay the full price (£146.88 including VAT). Further details are available from Composit Software (0952) 595436.

The Composer's Pen; now available on the PC as well as the PCW



Competition winners

Were you bowled over by our Scorecard competition? Or was it a good innings? The three winners in May's cricketing compo will be hit for six to discover their good fortune.
So, Sarah Le Riche from Berkeley, Glos., David Smith of Rayleigh, Essex and Andrew Eustace from London, stand by for Scorecard - it's on its way shortly. The answers are as follows: 1. Graham Gooch 2. Gary Sobers 3. John Major 4.1989
Well done one and all!

NEWS

INTERNATIONAL

News this month of several clubs based abroad. A couple of months ago we reported on the JOYCE-Computer club in Germany; now comes news of their next door neighbours, the Dutch.

The JOYCE Computer Club Holland has been in existence for over three years now, and has a membership of over 50. Not surprising considering the range of services they offer: a club magazine (called JOYCE Nieuws, and packed full articles, programs and advertisements) and twelve club meetings a year are pretty standard for any club.

But on top that there are the offers of help in repairing and upgrading the machines, a telephone information line, a scanning/digitising service, a laser printer available, over 10 megabytes of programs on Public Domain discs, file transfers, disc formatting in unusual configurations, ribbon re-inking, a book on BASIC ("JOYCE Starters BASIC)...the list seems endless.

Further information is available from Rolf van de Kamer, Trompstraat 16", 1056 JA AMSTERDAM - if you live in Holland it sounds like a bandwagon well worth jumping on.

GOING USA

Perhaps you, like us, thought America was a PCW desert. Not so, we are told: apparently there are some 70,000 PCWs in the States, and so, quite naturally, PCW User Groups have sprung up.

The Rev. Richard La Fountain is our informant, and himself the chairman of a BASIC programmers group - the "Hands on Mallard (BASIC)" club. They can be contacted through Reverend La Fountain at 311 Oakcrest Ave., Pitman, NJ 08071.

Other groups are Amstrad PCW User's Sig, c/o Al Warsh, 2751 Reche Canyon Rd #93, Colton, CA 92324 and the Amstrad Users Group, USA, c/o Harley Ristad, 12741 Matteson Avenue #3, Los Angeles, CA 90066.

Anybody in America is, of course, more than welcome to get in contact - as is anybody on this side of the Atlantic. In fact, we are positively invited to get in touch, by the Reverend if, (and we quote), we can drag ourselves away from our 'Cricket and Crumpets'. So that's what they all think we get up to...

RING IN THE NEW

Meanwhile, back at home, Timothy Arnold lives in Newhaven and is eager to start a local users club in that area - perhaps, he says, for people living between Brighton and Eastbourne. If you wish to join in the venture, contact him at 18 Railway Road, Newhaven, Sussex BN9 0AS. If you have a PCW why not get in touch - there's nothing to lose!

Moving northwards, Dave Fisher also intends to form a club, this time in the South Cumbria/Lake District area. He would be more than happy to have a chat with any PCWers in the area about the idea, so ring him on (0229) 64275.

A new club, too, in Wolverhampton. Meeting at Bilston College in Wolverhampton on the last Thursday of each month, Chris Derricott (0785 823779) tells us that they have the use of 12 8512 machines for their meetings. The June meeting (June 27th) will be the last one this side of the summer holidays, but keep your eyes skinned (or get in touch with Chris himself) for details of the September meeting.

REGULARS

With the summer coming up, most clubs will be taking a couple of months off for a well-earned breather before getting back to business in the autumn. The M25 club, for instance, have a meeting on July 15th before taking August off, and the Teesside Club are also meeting on July 15th (to explore LocoFile) before their summer break.

Hereford Computer Club will hopefully enjoy a fine summer evening's weather for their barbecue on 6th July (where's our invitation, then?). It is nice to hear, by the way, that they have linked up with one of the newer clubs - the Gloucestershire PCW User Group (or G.PUG as they have taken to calling themselves) - for a couple of joint meetings. Long may such interaction flourish!

AND FINALLY...

Don't forget to keep in touch with us over the summer months. Our post box is ever open (8000 Plus never goes on holiday!), waiting to hear of your club's autumn program (and we don't mean LocoScript). The address is Club News, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Letters to arrive the first week of the month preceding cover date.

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External Affair

Persuading an external printer to work with your PCW can be difficult. Alec Rae provides a guide to choosing and using a new model

There was a time when you could always tell PCW owners. They always wrote everything (including notes to the milkman) on their PCW and it was remarkably simple to pick out that very distinctive PCW internal printer type face.

There were other printers available, even in those far off, early days. But then there were few printer drivers written for the PCW and buying an external printer was an adventure for all but the most computer literate user.

Those days are now gone. As all the old PCW printers are now getting well and truly worn out there is now the choice of literally hundreds of printers for the PCW user to choose from. At the bottom end of the scale there a wide variety of 9-pin dot matrix printers, using the same technology as the old internal printer but always faster and more effective.

For those looking for something a bit more impressive there are 24-pin dot matrix printers, daisy wheel printers, inkjets and even laser jets that can all be run from the PCW giving your output a distinction that could never be achieved with the old bundled Amstrad model.

The advantages of using an external printer are obvious. One of the best selling points of the PCW was that you got a computer and a printer for a price less than many printers would cost. But this meant that the bundled printer (whether dot matrix or daisy wheel) has never been a particularly sophisticated beast. So if you own a 9512 you can get the best out of the graphic capabilities of the PCW by adding on a dot matrix.

If you have an 8000 series machine you can get a standard of output from a new printer that would compare with the print from any computer, in a fraction of the time that the internal printer took.

However, the disadvantages have perhaps not been quite as obvious. Will you be able to use all your favourite programs? Will there be any niggling incompatibility problems? And will there be hidden costs? Nowadays, if you buy carefully, there should be few serious problems. And adding a new printer could open up a whole new lease of life for your PCW. So, let's have a look at the choices on offer.

PCW COMPATIBLE PRINTERS – THE MAIN TYPES

9-PIN DOT MATRIX

Anyone with a PCW 8000 series machine knows what a dot matrix does. Just as the image you see on your PCW's screen is made up of thousands of tiny dots, so the image you get from a dot matrix is made up of thousands of tiny dots of ink.

So the dot matrix print head is made up of a row of nine pins. These pins can be pushed forward to strike against the printer ribbon leaving a small black dot on the page. The computer tells the printer which pins to be pushed forward and which to hold back to create the shape of a letter or an illustration.

The PCW uses a 9-pin dot matrix but one that is unlike any other that you will see. Most printers act like little computers with their own in-built fonts and can therefore be attached to virtually any computer.

The PCW printer doesn't have all this built-in thinking power and relies totally on the computing capacity of the PCW. This is why things seldom go wrong with the PCW printer. There isn't much to go wrong. On the other hand because it is so closely tied in with the Amstrad it can only be used with this machine.

The nine-pin printers available for use with the PCW will be much cleverer and, therefore, more expensive. However they will also be faster and will have far more features.

24-PIN DOT MATRIX

The major problem with the dot matrix method of printing is that, because the image is made up of rectangular dots, it is difficult to create a curved line without giving an effect somewhat similar to the business end of a saw.

As there are curved edges on virtually every letter in the alphabet, using a 9-pin dot matrix can leave text looking a little ragged. This is especially true when you get into the bigger type sizes where the stepping effect is even more accentuated.

One way round it is to use smaller dots. A 24-pin dot matrix uses a print head with two rows of 12 dots to cover the same depth. This obviously can reduce stepping, and can increase speed (it takes only one pass for letter quality print instead of the two required on a 9-pin machine). It gives a far better output, that can be used in any business application.

DAISY WHEEL PRINTERS

9512 owners probably bought their machines for the improved type style of the internal daisy-wheel printer. In a daisy wheel, each letter of the alphabet is etched on a block at the end of an arm (just like the letters in a typewriter).

To get a letter the computer batters the block against the inked ribbon leaving a perfect impression of the letter on the paper. If you want to change the type face you simply change the daisy wheel. As it only takes one action to produce a whole character this makes for improvements in time.

The result is a fast, first rate standard of output. The disadvantage is, of course, that you cannot print anything other than what is on the daisy wheel. Graphics and many special characters are impossible.

INKJET

Ink jets are one step down from laser printers. Ink is blown through a nozzle and dries, immediately, on the page in tiny dots. This gives a very positive, black image, with good rounded curves, cutting out stepping completely.

It can handle text and graphics easily and competently, providing you can get a printer driver for your software (not necessarily that easy – see the section on printer drivers in the 'Jargon Explained' margin note).

It builds up the image a line at a time like a dot matrix (unlike the laser printer which will churn out a whole page at a time) although it is often not as fast as a dot matrix.

LASER PRINTERS

These are the top end of the market for the professional user. The page is electrically charged with the image of your page and toner (a dry powdered ink) attaches itself to the paper and is sealed there by a heating process.

This gives results as good as many professional printers with no problems of stepping or distortion. Once the image has been produced the laser printer can also reproduce the page over and over again just as quickly as many photocopiers (but with more professional-looking results).

WHICH ONE SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?

So what type of printer should you buy? That obviously depends on what standard of output you want and how much money you are prepared to spend to achieve it. Each type can be used successfully with the PCW and obviously each has its niche in the market.

However in general terms if you only want typed output a daisy wheel is a good (if rather noisy) investment. If you want to take full advantage of the PCW's graphic abilities (and remember that includes details like the ability to produce special foreign characters or accents) you should go for a 9-pin for economy or a 24-pin for quality. Inkjets are now becoming more reasonably priced, giving a professional finish. Laser printers are a must for the really serious user. Now let's have a look at some of the external printers currently available.

PANASONIC KX-P1123

When you see a printer with seven letters and numbers after its name you know this is a machine that does a lot. The Panesonic was, by far, the most sophisticated printer reviewed.

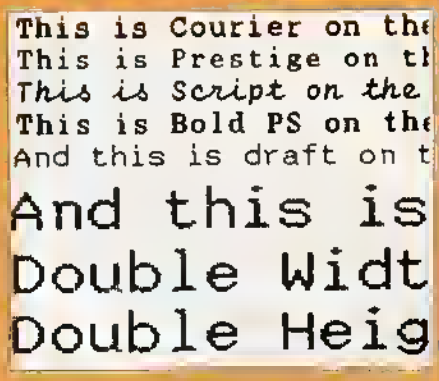
As a 24-pin printer it had that extra quality of output needed for a business application. But it had a lot more. it is safe to say that the Panasonic offered virtually all the features of all the other printers combined. In fact, the control panel had so many options it looked like something from the Starship Enterprise. This means it is not as instinctive to use as many although quite logical once you get used to it.

Semi-automatic single sheet feed, in-built continuous paper tractor and peper park are all included as well as top and bottom feed (that's a slot in the bottom for continuous papar to be fed through if you hava one of those fancy computer desks). A clever touch was the use of the cover for the tractor feed as a peper feader.

it wes also the only printer to offer Macros – a system like a submit file on the PCW where you can set up your favourite fonts and settings at the press of a button. It also has Quiet Mode – e slower method of printing which cuts the noise down substantially.

What it also has in an impressive list of unusual fonts. It has three draft fonts, Courier, Prestige and Script (an interasting 'handwritten' face) a PS bold face es well as a vast variety of pitches (10 possibilities ranging from 40 charactars per line to 160 cpi.

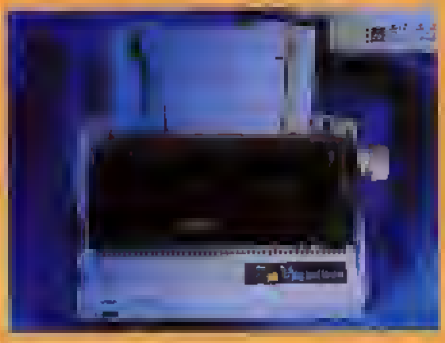
It has a complicated but affective way of handling continuous paper. You have two rollers end switch between then if you want to go back,



during which tima it bleeps away merrily.This sophistication does mean the manual is not as accessible as some. it has an Epson LQ850 emulation (or any LQ printer, in fact) which makes it quite easy for LocoScript and other PCW programs to handle without problems.

Ease of use 2/5
Range of features 5/5
Quality of output 3/5
Manual 2/5

STAR LC10 – MULTI-FONT



Although this was the only nine-pin dot matrix tested it came out wall compared with its mora sophisticated 24-pin cousins. A neat compact machine, it measured only 14x11x3inches – important if you have limited desk space.

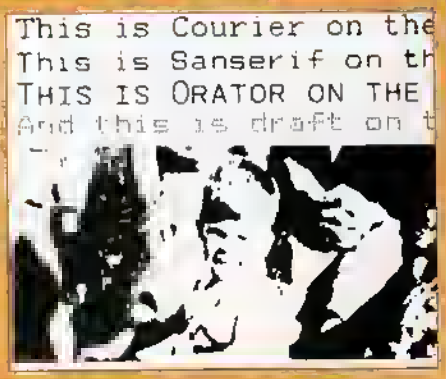
Like all the dot matrix printers tested it had semi automatic paper loading for single shaats and an in-built trector feeder for continuous paper neatly hiddan behind a penel at the back. One real advantage was the Peper Park which unloads continuous paper to allow you to use a single sheet end then loads it again in e matter of seconds comparod with the severel hours this can take manually.

But the real feature of the Star LC10 Multi-Font (as the name would suggest) is that it does have a good ranga of in-built fonts. As well as a a good clear draft face it has Courier, a Sans Serif face and Orator which can used in upper and lower cese or in small capitals. All of these faces cen be used in italics.

There is pica and elite pitch (both of which can be condensed) and proportional spacing for all faces. You can also get double height and double width (or both together) or even quadruple height and width – although admittedly this is getting a bit ragged. You can do ell the usual emphasis, double strike, underline, overline, subscript, superscript and even download special characters. It will even give you e special styie of grey 'dot grephics'.

The control panel is simple to use and the DIP switches are aasily available. The manual is full, it is almost written in understandable English (quite a feat for a printer manual) and it has a very good index.

It amulates the Epson LX-800 (yes, there is a



LocoScript 2 printer driver for that) although it doesn't seem to work perfectly with the standard PCW emulation in some CP/M programs.

In the speed trials it looked quite slow at latter quality but this is because a 9-pin has to make a double pass – making it slower than a 24-pin which only needs a single pess.

Ease of use 4/5
Range of Features 3/5
Quality of output 2/5
Manual 3/5

EPSON LQ-550

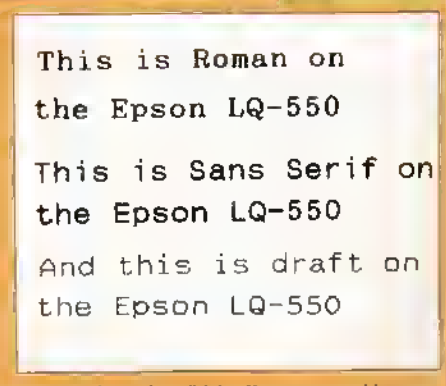
If everyone else is trying to emulate you, you must be doing something right. Certainly there must be fewer compatibility worries about using a real-life 24 pin Epson printer than any other. There seems to be no mention of other emulations in the manual, which shows a fair amount of confidence. Having said that, we could find no specific LocoScript 2 printer driver for the LQ-550 although it worked without problem in all the CP/M programs we tried.

8000 series PCW owners will feel at home fitting the long PCW-type printer ribbon (the Star end the Panasonic use these new-fangled cartridges).

The control panel is sheer simplicity to use although this may be because it offered fawer features than the other dot matrix printers. There are only three fonts (draft, Roman and Sans Serif) although you can add anothar six with an optional font cartridge.

The manual is spoilt by not having an index; instead, thara is an alphabetical list of details of most of the features you are interested in.

The Epson ofters underline, overscore, outline and shadow printing, double height and width. However, it appeared to be the only dot



matrix printer that didn't offer paper parking.

Ease of use 3/5
Range of features 2/5
Quality of output 3/5
Manual 2/5

CITIZEN 124D

As, basically, a budget machine the Citizen does offer quite a range of features. It has only three fonts – draft, Courier and Times – and of those only draft is a sans face (no serifs), which might be considered a little limiting. However the draft is quite clear and legible – and incredibly fast. In fact, the Citizen won easily in the text printing time trials quite easily for draft and was second in letter quality (see chart).

There is a wide range of pitches from 5 to 20 characters per inch, double height printing and that important Quiet Mode printing. The control panel is perhaps not the easiest to get to grips with but poses no real problems.

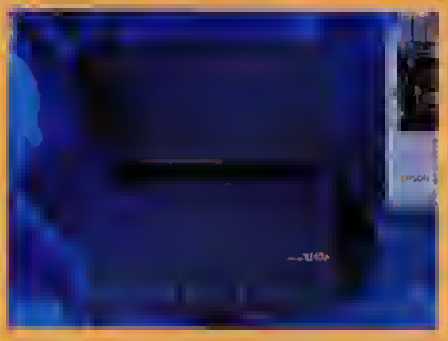
It has top and bottom loading and paper parking and it is the only machine with automatic paper feeding. If you buy the optional manual paper feeder (an extra £40) you can just drop paper in the top and it is positioned perfectly.

It can emulate an Epson LQ or an EX (should be no problem finding printer drivers there) and the manual is thorough and quite readable with an index and a ready reference guide to escape codes. The only criticism is that Citizen do not seem to realise that the PCW is a CP/M computer. Do not follow their advice on MBASIC and CP/M computers. It will not work on a PCW.

```
This is Times Roman
on the Citizen 124D

This is Courier
on the Citizen 124D

And this is draft on
the Citizen 124D

This is Times Roman
```

Ease of use 3/5
Range of features.....4/5
Quality of output 3/5
Manual.....3/5

CANON BJ-10E



As the only bubblejet printer reviewed the Canon obviously stood out as different. For a start it is tiny. At 8x12x2 inches it is smaller even than the PCW internal printer (the others were at least twice the size). And it has a special feature so that it can work standing on its end, taking up a minute amount of desk space.

You don't have to worry about quiet mode. The inkjet process means that it was the quietest printer by far. And being an ink-jet means the quality of print is amazing.

It only has one font (Courier) but the blackness and the smoothness of the line is a delight – again, the best quality of any printer we tested for this feature.

Draft print doesn't really apply with an ink-jet although there is an economy mode which uses less ink (although still very clear) which takes roughly the same time to complete.

It doesn't handle continuous paper (inkjets don't do that sort of thing) but if you invest in the automatic paper feeder you can print off page after page on single sheet paper – a much classier way of doing things.

In the time trials it came out significantly slower – although you are not comparing like with like here. When you start a dot matrix the paper is already fed in. With the Canon it loads the first page after the print command so you can take off all the time you would normally spend loading up continuous paper. Loading the automatic paper feeder takes a matter of seconds.

There is a definite downside however. The machine only supports an IBM emulation making it very difficult to use with a lot of software. There are LocoScript and MicroDesign 2 printer drivers that work perfectly but they are the exception rather than the rule.

And unfortunately the manual is virtually useless. It misses out vital information, such as how to get access to the double-height and width print from software or how to configure the machine to get a £ instead of a #.

Also, to save space, the makers have cut out virtually all the displays on the control panel so it is virtually impossible to work out details like what font or emphasis you are using. These details spoil an otherwise excellent machine.

```
This is high quality
print on the
Canon BJ 10-e
and this is economy
print on the
Canon BJ 10-e
```

Ease of use 3/5
Range of features.....2/5
Quality of output.....5/5
Manual.....1/5

Jargon explained...

Printer Driver: This is a piece of software used by a program to convert its print codes into commands that the printer can understand. Before buying a printer, find out whether your favourite programs have printer drivers for that make of machine. If in doubt contact the software authors to check compatibility.

USING AN EXTERNAL PRINTER: HOW TO GET STARTED

Before you start thinking about what printer to buy there are one or two hidden costs to take into account. A new printer will not plug into the back of the PCW like the internal printer.

Because the PCW does not have an in-built printer port you will have to acquire a parallel (sometimes passing under the alias Centronics) port.

This is found on an interesting box of tricks called an RS232 costing about £50. This fits on the expansion slot on the back on the PCW – the bit that sticks out just under where the printer leads fit.

As well as the parallel port this price includes a serial port that will allow you to link up to a modem or another computer and pass information back and forward – so look at it as an investment for the future.

There are some older printers that work off the serial port of the RS232. If possible avoid these serial printers Anyone who has gone through the tortuous processes of working out baud rates and parity for a modem know that it is not the sort of thing you want to have to deal with when you are printing.

You also may need a parallel printer cable to link the printer to the PCW, costing about £10.

Be careful, when choosing your printer cable, that it has a male parallel fitting at both ends. Most printer cables in computer shops are for IBM compatible PCs and are not suitable.

These physically link up the printer to your PCW. The cable fits into the lower fitting on the RS232.

Printer control from software

Most programs will run, virtually problem free with a good Epson emulation. And many of the newer programs now give you the choice of printer drivers.

For example, LocoScript 1 cannot be persuaded to work with anything other than the standard printer. But LocoScript 2, on the other hand has an excellent choice of printer drivers – so much so, that the files fill several discs and there are few problems in installing them and configuring the program to handle it. Say, for example, your printer emulates an Epson LQ2500. You simply copy INSTALL.DRV and all the files for LQ2500 (the Epson printer driver and the relevant character set) into group 0 on your start of day disc. This includes LQ2500.PRI and the three files starting with LQ2500.#

When you load LocoScript these are all be transferred automatically to group 0 in M drive and LQ2500 becomes an option in your printers. Press [PTR], [f5]

Printer, cursor to Matrix and press [RETURN]. Choose LQ2500 with a [+] and [RETURN] and then [EXIT]. Once loaded, you can choose the LQ2500 option in Settings [f6] and follow through the options. Remember to pick 'CPS parallel' in the printer options menu. Then, save the SETTINGS.STD to ensure that it loads every time you use LocoScript. When printing out an existing file you need to press [PTR] followed by [f5] for 'Printer' to pick the correct printer driver.

Other programs, like MicroDesign 2, give you a choice of generic types. You can pick an A or B type 9-pin, 24-pin or laser printer. If yours doesn't work properly with type A switch to type B. One tip for speed with MicroDesign 2, however, is that you can use a 9-pin driver even if you have a 24-pin printer. It doesn't seem to make a tremendous difference to the finished product and it takes a fraction of the time.

Programs like Protext will even give you the opportunity to write your own printer driver using the SETPRINT.COM utility. This is a matter of taking the printer codes from the manual and attributing them to the correct character or function. But be wary of this unless you really know what you are doing.

Most printer manuals are written very much with the IBM user in mind and do not seem to realise that there is such an animal as the Amstrad PCW. And many printer manuals are often written assuming, at least, a first class honours degree in computer science.

Printer control from CP/M

If you can control the printer from inside the software you are made. This will take away all the problems of making the computer send all the data to the parallel port instead of the internal printer and making sure it prints out in the required typeface and pitch.

If not, don't despair. It is still possible to do a lot using a couple of files on your CP/M utilities disc. One is DEVICE.COM, the handy way of finding out what is happening to your peripherals (that smart computer talk for all the things attached to the computer like the keyboard or the screen). If you have the disc with DEVICE.COM in drive a: type DEVICE and you should see a list including (at the end) the words LST:=LPT. This means that the chosen listing device (the printer to us mortals) is the 'internal printer.

It will ask if you want to make any changes. Just type in **LST:=CEN** (that's short for Centronics) and [RETURN]. If you check the list again you will see that the change has been made.

This has to be done every time you start the PCW but if you include the line **DEVICE LST:=CEN** in your AUTOEXEC.BAT it will happen automatically on start up.

The other useful tool is faithful old BASIC. If you don't know how to use BASIC it might be worthwhile reading up a bit – especially anything on printer control codes. With a disc containing BASIC.COM in the relevant drive, type **BASIC** and the program loads.

After that if you type in **LPRINT "Hello** and [RETURN] (you only need the first double quotes) your printer should print the word Hello.

Then if you can decipher the control codes from the printer manual you can send them down the cable to the printer again using LPRINT. Control codes are a series of letters and numbers that the printer recognises. It won't print them but it will change its settings to suit.

With this you could change font or pitch or switch from draft to letter quality or underline text. In fact anything you want to do with a printer can be carried out with control codes.

This may take a bit of deciphering though. Say you see in a manual that the code to print double-height characters is ESC W1 that might not mean a lot. If it says after that 27 119 49 you might be even more confused.

All this means is that you need to send three control characters to the PCW. The first ESC is the one that is nearly always used in front of control codes. It just says to the printer "don't print the next few characters – they are control codes."

In BASIC you write ESC as **CHR$(27)** – a fancy way of saying the 27th character in the ASCII character set. The second code to send is W. This can be done in two ways. Just type in **"W"** (in double quotes) or use the ASCII code for that letter – in this case **CHR$(119)**. Are you beginning to see a pattern here? Then the last code is number one. Again you could type in "1" or the ASCII code number – **CHR$(49)**. These are all joined by a plus sign ([+]) to show they are all linked together. So the final line in BASIC would be **CHR$(27)+"W"+"1"** or **CHR$(27)+CHR$(119)+CHR$(49)**.

Then, until you change the setting or reset the printer everything will print out double height. So, unless your program resets the printer, you can leave BASIC and go into your program, content in the knowledge that the printer will use the font, pitch or emphasis (bold, italic and so on) you have set.

With even a little experience of BASIC you could write yourself a simple program to download the appropriate codes to the printer either automatically or using a simple menu system.

Control panels/DIP switches

Most of the time you will be wanting to make changes to fonts and pitches through software. But external printers also allow you to change such things by controls on the printer itself. Often a light marks the chosen font or pitch.

But you can also choose default settings for a number of features such as page length, whether you use continuous or single sheet paper, choosing a UK character set and the emulation. This is done using DIP switches, tiny little switches secreted about the printer.

The manual will give you instructions as to whether these are to be switched on or off depending on what defaults you want to set.

Fonts

Most printers give you a choice of a number of fonts. These usually include a Times/Roman font (that's one with serifs – the little blobs at the end of the letters that make the type more readable), a Sans Serif/Helvetica font (a more modern face) and/or a Courier font (like a typewriter face). Some have quite fancy faces that look nice but may not be as readable as these three old favourites.

They also usually offer one or more draft faces that can be produced at very high speed. And these are usually of a much higher quality than the PCW's draft font and compare well with the PCW internal printer's NLQ print. ●

Jargon explained...

Emulations:
An emulation is a way of making one printer pretend to be another, better known printer. This is a simple way of getting round the problem that each printer may want different commands to perform the same functions. In effect if your printer has, say an Epson emulation it means that you can set your printer to use exactly the same codes as an Epson. As Epsons have been around a long time there are Epson printer drivers written for most software. The PCW printer, is in effect, an Epson emulation. So if your printer emulates Epson you know you are going to be pretty safe with most PCW software.

The other main printer emulation is the IBM Proprinter – ideal for those IBM-compatible PC owners but not really suitable for PCW owners. Be wary of printers that only have an IBM emulation.

SPEED TRIALS

Manufacturers claim all sorts of characters per minute rate but the best way to judge is to run them all off on the same 1000 document (running over four pages so it takes in the time taken for a page throw) and the same illustration from MicroDesign.

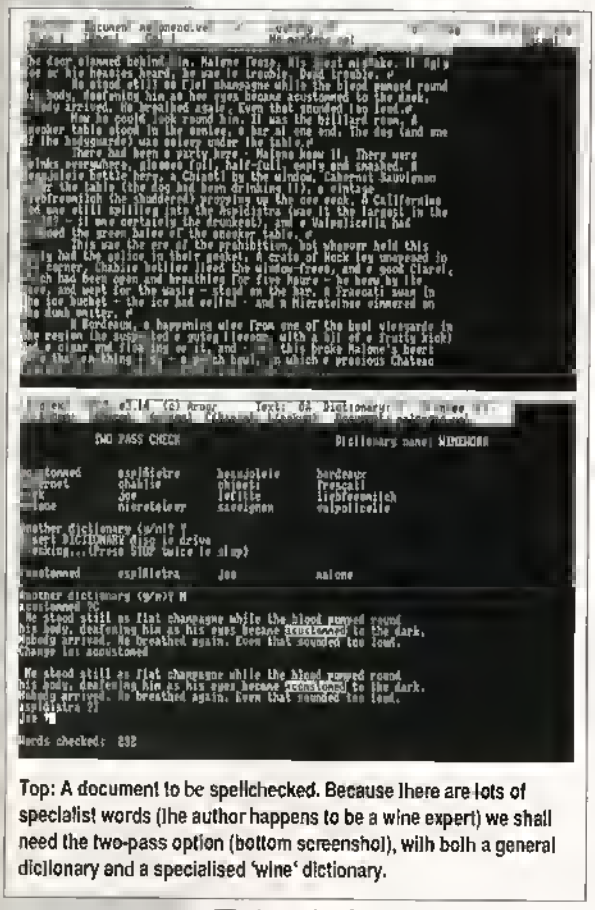
• For proper comparison all the 24-pin printers pictures were printed using a 9-pin printer driver (and it was a lot quicker to do).

• Quiet Mode where it applies is always slower because it takes a double pass.

	Draft	LQ	Quiet	MD graphic
5tar LC-10	1 min 26 secs	5 min 11 secs	•	1 min 58 secs
Panasonic KX-P1123	1 min 16 secs	2 min 15 secs	5 min 02 secs	2 min 18 secs
Epson LQ-550	1 min 19 secs	2 min 40 secs	•	2 min 17 secs
Citizen 124D	1 min 04 secs	2 min 31 secs	4 min 45 secs	2 min 56 secs
Canon BJ 10-e	3 min 04 secs	3 min 22 secs	•	3 min 16 secs
PCW internal printer	2 min 10 secs	7 min 37 secs	•	2 min 34 secs *(different quality)*

Spelling Test

Martin Le Poidevin helps you check your spelling, write a dictionary and solve crosswords more easily, using Protext



Top: A document to be spellchecked. Because there are lots of specialist words (the author happens to be a wine expert) we shall need the two-pass option (bottom screenshot), with both a general dictionary and a specialised 'wine' dictionary.

It's a rule of computing: words often look wrong on the computer screen, even when they are right. A sub-rule states that words often look right, even when they are wrong.

Printing out the document will bring some of those spelling mistakes to light - for some reason it's easier to spot them in print rather than on the screen - but it's also nice to have a second line of defence - the Spell Checker.

Protext's spell check either comes with the program (in the full version) or can be bought separately (it's called ProSpell) if you own Pocket Protext. Users of the full version will find that their SPELL.COM can also used directly from CP/M in the same way as it is used within Protext. That, however, is for later experiment - for the moment, we will be calling up the spell check as part of the word processor.

Making a start

Using it at its most basic level could not be simpler. Get the document that you want to check on to the screen (if you have been editing it, make sure that you save a copy to disc just in case); enter command mode, and type SPELL [RETURN]. The screen will be rewritten, and you will be asked to insert your dictionary disc (which is on the reverse of the master disc, unless, as a 9512 owner, you keep all your master files on the one disc).

Familiar surroundings

If you are familiar with LocoSpell you may be surprised by the way that Protext checks its documents. The document itself is never on screen - instead, all the words contained within it are sorted into alphabetical order, and then compared to the computer's dictionary in this order. The process is therefore much faster than in LocoScript.

Hopefully, of course, it will find no mistakes. If this is so, all you will see will be a message towards the bottom of the screen registering how many words have been checked - basically a word count which ignores single letter words. But if the computer does come across a word it does not recognise, it will question it.

If a word is questioned in this way, you have four courses of action. The first, and simplest, is to tell the computer to ignore the word. This is the Protext equivalent of LocoSpell's 'SiC', and it will pass over all other occurrences of the word in the current document, marking each one as correct (it even tells you how many occurrences there are!). Activate this option by pressing I.

On the other hand, if the word is correctly spelt but has been questioned by Protext (because it does not as yet appear in the dictionary), the best course of action may be to add it to the dictionary, so that it will be marked correct in all subsequent documents. The key for this is S.

Changing times

The most used option, though, is 'change', which is activated by pressing C. This allows you to edit a word. When you choose this option, three lines or so of the document appear on screen, with the word in question highlighted in the centre of the screen. Finally the word is repeated again - and it is this version that you can edit.

Edit it using the normal editing procedures; when you are happy, press [RETURN]. The three lines will appear again, now with the word corrected. If the computer recognises this new word it will continue; however, if it doesn't, it will ask the same question as before. At this point it is up to you to decide whether to Ignore or Store the word.

The fourth spell check option is 'lookup' (L). A typical use for this might be if a word has been marked as incorrect, but you are not sure how exactly to spell it. The computer will run through the dictionary, picking out words that closely match your original. When it has finished it will print the original word again, so that you can deal with it either by ignoring, storing or changing it.

The general rule, then, is that if the computer does not recognise a word, even if it is one that you have corrected, it will question it - and you can react with one of these key presses.

When the computer has done a complete scan of the document and all the uncertain words have been dealt with, the spell check signs off with a summary of the process - the number of words dealt with, the number of different words checked (this number may surprise you), how many were unrecognised, how many added to the dictionary, and so on.

Finally, you will be asked to insert a Protext disc, and Protext will be reloaded (this has to happen because the SPELL.COM file is a program in its own right). But don't worry - the corrected version of your document will be waiting for you on screen, and all you have to do is reformat it (the best way of doing this, unless you want one last check on the grammar in the piece, is to use the FORMAT command).

And there's more

But all this - useful as it is - only represents a small part of the SPELL program's power. Anagrams, word searches, dictionary creation, listing and editing, two-pass checking - all these are supported by the program.

These are available from the Spell Menu - type SM while you are in command mode, and make sure that you have the disc with SPELL on it in the current drive. This is the equivalent of loading SPELL from CP/M.

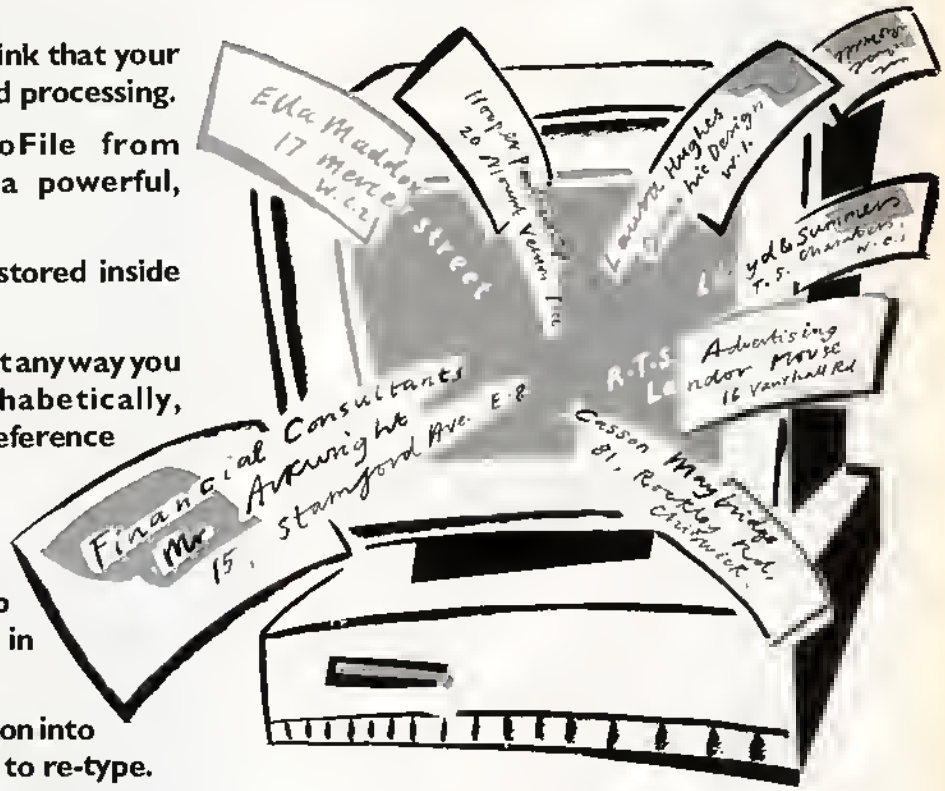
From here you can quite easily run a spell check on a document - even one which was not originally written in Protext. What is more, you can make that check happen on a document in whatever drive and group you like, using a dictionary stored on a specific drive.

The keys to use in this situation are all listed on the menu - D and G to change the drive and disc group of the document to be checked, and V to change the drive of the dictionary. Be warned - when you press those keys, nothing seems to happen, until you look

Ask grammar

Like all other spellchecks, Protext will only pick up on spelling, and not grammatical mistakes. It will know that the last word in "The yolk of an egg is wite" is wrong, but will not point out that the verb in "The yolk of the egg are white" is also wrong.

With LocoFile, your PCW can have a powerful 'card index' database.



The chances are, you currently think that your PCW can't do much more than word processing.

But now you can add LocoFile from Locomotive Software, and have a powerful, yet easy to use database.

It's just like having a card index stored inside your PCW.

You can lay out your cards in almost any way you like. Sort and index them alphabetically, numerically or by date and cross reference them up to eight different ways.

And, working with the menus you're already used to with LocoScript 2, you can instantly call up a card on screen even if you're in the middle of editing a document.

Then simply transfer the information into your document without even having to re-type.

If you have a PCW 9512 or an 8256/8512 with LocoScript 2, you can simply add LocoFile.

But if you've a PCW 8256/8512 with the original LocoScript, you'll need LocoScript 2 and LocoFile together.

Which, bought as a package at £44.90, means that for just £9.95 you can upgrade to the more powerful LocoScript 2 and almost treble the speed of scrolling through your documents.

In short, whether for business, club or personal use, we've given a new dimension to your word processor.

For more information, simply fill in the coupon or phone Katy Buchan on (0306) 740606.

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Please send me more information on LocoFile and the LocoScript 2 Family KB

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LocoScript 2 costs £29.95 and LocoFile costs £34.95. For existing LocoScript 1 users, LocoScript 2 with LocoFile costs just £44.90.
All prices exclude VAT. Locomotive Software, Oorking, Surrey RH4 1YL

Be there!

It is important to have a document on screen when you invoke SPELL from within Protext. If there is no document on the screen, the program will refuse to run. The way round this is to use SM instead.

Case in point

All the words in the dictionary, and those in the document being checked are converted to lower case. This makes the matching process quicker; on the other hand, it means that all the unrecognised words from a document appear in lower case - and there's nothing as off-putting as a postcode in lower case letters!

Leave it out!

Although it comes with 32000 words, there do seem nevertheless to be some surprising omissions on the Protext dictionary. But given a few editing sessions, and lots of word storing, you should be able to produce a dictionary that suits your general needs. And don't forget you can set up your specialist application dictionaries, too.

at the top of the screen, and see that the drive specifications are changing as you press the key. Set these up as you want them - if you are not sure where your files are use the C key to Catalogue the current text drive and group.

Now you can order the spell check, in either a single or a double pass operation. A single pass is exactly like checking a document from Protext. The two-pass option, though, allows you to put the document through more than one dictionary. For instance, if you are bilingual, you might maintain two dictionaries - one for each of your languages.

Making a pass

Normally you will write in only one language and a single pass will be sufficient; however, there may be times when you use both, and want to check both. The process you need here is the two-pass check (in fact, you can do as many 'passes' as you have dictionaries). Load your text and first dictionary as indicated by the computer. It will now print all the words that this first dictionary does not recognise to the screen. At this stage, though, it will not question them.

Instead, at the end of that pass, it will ask for another dictionary. Insert that, and the computer will run another check - but only on the words that the first dictionary did not recognise. Again, only the words that dictionary number 2 does not recognise will come up on the screen.

At the end of this pass, it will again ask if there is another dictionary. It is only now (assuming that you do not have another dictionary - if you do, the process will be repeated again) that the words found in neither pass will be questioned. All four of the options discussed above are available, although 'Storing' to the correct dictionary takes some concentration.

In fact, it is better to note down the missing words, and add them later using the Edit dictionary option.

For this, you will have to move to the Utilities menu, by choosing U from the main menu; arriving at the second menu choose E for edit. This simply allows you to add words to the dictionary by typing them in at the prompt. To quit press [STOP].

To check whether or not a word is already in the dictionary, you will need the List (L) option.Because of the size of the dictionary files you will also need to specify a word at which the listing should start. You can hold the file as it is scrolling by pressing [STOP], with [STOP] again to exit, or any other key to continue the listing.

Testing for size

If you want to know how big your dictionary is the option is W for Word count. This option will also return an estimate of how full the dictionary is, expressed in percentage terms.

The dictionary which comes with Protext is large - over 32000 words. However, it is a very general dictionary. It does not contain many medical words, for instance, or many words pertinent to somebody who writes a lot about music or on computing matters.

For these applications - or for the second language suggested above - it is usually necessary to set up a completely new dictionary. This is easily done using the Utilities menu. First, initialise a blank dictionary using I, and select a name for it (you can change this later using the N command). Go back to Protext, and make a file of all the words that you want to include in your new dictionary. Don't make this alphabetical - it won't help the computer at all!

Save the file to the M: drive, call up the SPELL menu (using SM) and select the text drive as M: (using D as before). Now put the new dictionary file into A:, and go to the Utilities menu by pressing U, and select B (Build dictionary). At this point select D to build a dictionary rather than a file, which is the other option offered.

The computer will now go through the standard process of checking the document. However, the dictionary it is checking it against will not recognise any of the words, simply because it does not contain any! So all the words will be listed on the screen, as if to be questioned. However, because you have chosen the 'Build' option, they will also be automatically 'Stored' to the dictionary- you do not have to select that option yourself. When the pass has finished, you will have a new dictionary. From this point, of course, it can be updated using the Store or Edit commands, or by adding to the dictionary in the course of a normal spellchecking session.

Le mot juste

Two other useful utilities are available in the Protext SPELL program - the Find and Anagram functions. Both these will be boons to crossword addicts, quite apart from any use they will be to your general writing. The first takes a 'template' of letters and searches its dictionary for matches to this template.

For this, of course, you will have to be able to define 'spaces' in your template, which the computer can fill. There are two special characters, called 'wildcards', to help you achieve this.

```
                ANAGRAMS                          Dictionary name: PROSPELL
Word pattern: *train

abnormalities   aborting        abridgement     abridgements
abridgment      abridgments     absorption      abstracting
abstraction     accelerating    acceleration    administer
administers     administered    administering   administrate
administrated   administrates   administrating  administration
administrative  administrator   administrators  admiration
adoration       adulterating    adulteration    adventuring
advertising     advertisement   advertisements  affirmation
affronting      aggravating     aggravation     alerting
alliterating    alliteration    altering        alteration
alterations     alternating     alternative     alternatives
alternatively   anachronistic   anarchist       anarchists
antarctic       antarctica      anthracite      anthropologist
anthropologists antrim          apparition      apparitions
appertain       appertains      appertained     appertaining
appreciating    appreciation    apprentice      apprenticed
apprentices     apprenticing    appropriating   appropriation
approximating   approximation   approximations  arbitrating
arbitration     argentina       argumentative   arrangement
arraignments    arresting       articulating    articulation
artisan         artisans        ascertain       ascertains
ascertained     ascertaining    aspirant        aspirants
aspirating      aspiration      aspirations     asserting
assertion       assertions      assorting
```

The anagram facility in action. The asterisk means that the computer will search for any extra combination of letters which can go alongside 'train'. This is just the start of the list.


```
                FIND WORDS                        Dictionary name: PROSPELL
Word pattern: ?t?n*

Searching...

atone           atoned          atones          atoning
atonement       atonements      itinerant       itinerary
stanch          stanched        staunches       stanching
stand           standard        standardisation standardise
standardised    standardises    standardising   standards
stands          standing        standpoint      standpoints
standstill      stank           stanza          stanzas
stench          stenched        stenches        stenching
stencil         stencils        stenographer    stenographers
stentorian      stanley         sting           stings
stingy          stinging        stink           stinks
stinking        stint           stints          stinted
stinting        stone           stony           stoned
stones          stoning         stun            stuns
stung           stunned         stunning        stunt
stunts          stunted         stunting        utan
utensil         utensils

PRESS A KEY TO RETURN TO THE MENU...
```

Protext's word search is also a strong utility. As with anagrams, you can mix up question marks and asterisks to make a 'template' for the computer to search.

The first is the 'single wildcard', represented by the character '?'. This tells the computer to fill the space with just one character , whereas the second option, the 'multiple wildcard' using the character '*', will allow the computer to fill the space with as many characters as necessary - from none, up to the longest set of letters that will still form a word.

Anagrams work in much the same way, including wildcards.

The Protext spell function, then, is much more than just a simple spellchecker. It offers many useful additional features, and it is yet another extremely powerful weapon in Protext's word processing armoury. ●

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LOCOPLUS

No problem is too small or too large for LocoPlus. We're here to help! This month Liz Bruce takes another look at your most trying LocoScript problems. So, put your difficulties into the capable hands of an expert and find out how to print on both sides of the paper, how to copy your most useful templates and much, much more!

Over to you

This is the page where the spotlight is firmly on you. Send us your problems and Liz will do her best to solve them. The address to write to is LocoPlus , 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Sorry but we cannot promise to answer all of your letters personally

Q *Dear Liz,*

Is there any way of copying changes made in the document set-up (tabs, margins and so on) into a TEMPLATE.STD? Recently, I set up a complicated template and spent some time and care on it, but I found that when I created my first document using that template, I still had to make several changes. Then I had to edit the template and make the changes there. It would have been much easier if I could have copied the layouts into the template. Can it be done?

A You cannot do exactly what you suggest. (Only LocoScript PC users can copy the document set-up from one document to another.) However, there is another way.

It is very common to find that the first time you use a template you have to make changes, and sometimes you need to change it at a later date too. Rather than try and remember the changes and edit them into your template, this is what you should do.

1. Erase the current TEMPLATE.STD.
2. Make a copy of your most recent document, which contains the changes to layouts. Copy it into the same group. You won't be allowed to do so without re-naming it during the copy, as you can't have two files with the same name in one group. So, when the confirmation menu appears showing you the name of the file you're copying and the new name and destination group, type in the new name, TEMPLATE.STD.
3. Now, edit your new template. With the cursor at the beginning of the file, press [CUT], then [DOC], then cut again and all the text will be cut out leaving you with a blank template incorporating all your most recent changes.

The original template has gone. All that remains is to copy your document (with the layout changes) over to a file called TEMPLATE>STD. It will become the new template for that group

On a more general note, there is nothing mysterious about TEMPLATE.STD.

Any document can become a template, simply by renaming it as TEMPLATE.STD. Just remember you can't have more than one template in a group, and so LocoScript will always look for a file by that name.

Q *Dear Liz,*

When printing multiple copies of a document on my Amstrad 8512 printer, I am annoyed to find that it prints nearer the top of the page each time, until it actually hits the perforations between the continuous sheets.

Why does this happen, and is there anything I can do to prevent this happening in future?

A I think you must have a mismatch between the paper you have loaded in the printer, and the paper you have told the printer it is loaded with! To be more precise, I think you must be setting the printer to 11" continuous and actually using A4 continuous. The printer would then think that each sheet is a little shorter than it actually is. The result is that it prints closer to the top of the next sheet.

Have a look at the paper you're using and measure it. If it is exactly 11" long, then it is indeed 11" paper. If it's not, there's your problem. If it does agree with what you're setting the printer to, you'll need to write to me again.

If it doesn't, and I'm pretty sure that's the problem, then you will need to set up a new paper type for A4 continuous. This is a simple process. If you don't know how to do this, see our guide to setting up new paper types in last month's Loco Plus. ➤

LocoScript offers you a number of standard paper sizes. The paper you have in your printer should be the same as the paper ticked on this list. If in doubt, use a ruler to check

Q *Dear Liz,*

I find the surgery you are running helpful and interesting. However, I read the first LocoPlus question in the March issue with interest. It begs a question. Everything I produce with the 9512 I want printed on both sides of the paper! What do I do?

For this precise reason I have not bothered to use the sheet feeder which came with the PCW. I have to hang over the printer feeding in every sheet. Is there a simple way of always being able to print page 2 on the reverse of page 1 when using continuous feed? I realise there have been suggestions made which I have not tried – they do not look simple! What I have in mind is a permanently set up template, not a system which requires fiddling every time I want to print a multi-page document.

I would also like to know this. When a long document is split up into several parts, how can the several parts (each ending on a different page and a different position on the page) be brought together to produce a document correctly numbered, without gaps? The separate parts, of course, each have their own page numbering, starting at page 1.

A The answer to your first question depends on who you are printing for. I have this problem too, as I write a lot and need to see the results on paper before I can edit properly. My solution is to use continuous feed paper, let a document print on one side, use this copy as a reference (without bursting the sheets apart). When I've finished with that copy, I use a felt-tip pen to cross out the text, then turn the whole thing over and use the other side for the next printout. This makes full use of the paper. Finished copies usually need to be produced on one side of the paper anyway.

However, if you need your finished work on both sides of the paper, you have a problem. LocoScript PC allows the user to select "print odd" or "print even" at the print stage, which is what you really want. Perhaps if there's enough demand Locomotive will incorporate this in the next release of LocoScript 2.

In the meantime, there is no simple solution. There have been various clever methods, but probably the simplest is the following one:

1) Keep your document in fairly small parts, say four pages.

2) When you finish each part, make a copy. In one copy, cut out every other page, and in the other cut out the alternative pages. Yes, this mucks up your page numbering, but it is possible to number the pages manually at the bottom instead of automatically in a footer. All a bit of a trial but not as bad as it sounds once you get used to it.

3) Rename your file containing the first page with the extension .ODD and the file containing the second page .EVE. Then print .ODD, turn the paper over and print .EVE.

OK, I guess that involved fiddling but it's the best I can do, I'm afraid.

On your second query, again the answer depends on why you want to do it. It is possible to use "Insert text" to add all the parts of the document together, then check the page breaks and print it out. However, this is not really necessary.

When typing in part of a large document, don't worry about the page breaks, just decide how long you wish to keep each part, let's say six pages. When you reach page seven, keep typing for a few lines, then use copy and cut to remove the lines on page seven. Store these in a block, finish the edit, create your next part and paste in those few lines.

This way you know that the overlap is exactly correct and the page break at the end of each section is also correct.

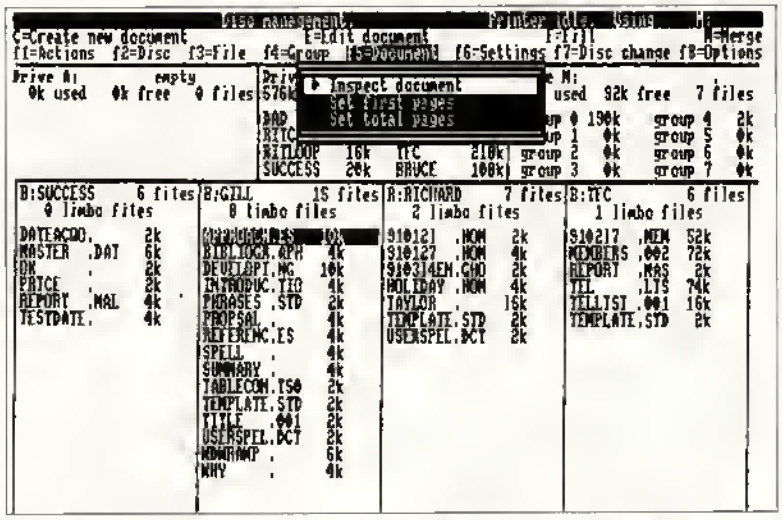
Page numbering is easily handled. You can set the first page number in the document itself. To do this, go into Document Set-up [f1], then press [f5], for Page, and choose Page number. You can then type in what you want the first page number of that section to be.

However, this can break down if you then go back to a previous part and add text. If the section before now stops at page 8 instead of page 6, your next section starting at page 7 no longer makes sense.

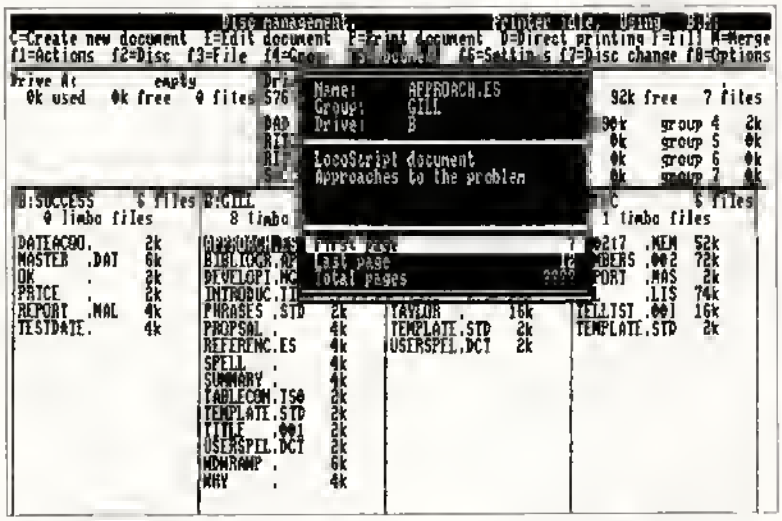
You don't have to edit each document to correct the page numbering. You can do it from the Disc Manager Screen. With the cursor on the document you wish to change, select [f5]=Inspect document, and press [ENTER] to confirm. The page numbering will be displayed, and can be changed simply by putting the cursor on 'First page number' and typing in what you want that number to be, then pressing [ENTER]. The rest of the page numbering will be adjusted to match.

It is even possible to make all of this happen automatically, but I have found that generally people get so confused over counters that it is easier, and more accurate, to do it manually.

The easiest way to handle all this is to name your files so that the parts are consecutive on the Disc Manager Screen, for example by naming them Part.001, Part.002 and so on. Then you can simply check the page numbers from the Disc Manager. ➤



The option to inspect a document will produce a short description that includes the page number. To choose this option, place the cursor over the document and press [f5]



The page number can be altered by moving the cursor over the line First page and typing in a number. From this point on all of the pages will be named in sequence from the first page

Dear Liz,

I own an Amstrad PCW 8256 with the memory upgrade and an external 3" disc drive, which I fitted myself by following the instructions given in your magazine. I have a question that I am hoping you can help me with.

When I use proportional spacing on a document set up for A5 size paper using the font Penman, it always ends up printing off the right hand side of the paper. How can I stop this?

Liz replies:

Your margins, scale pitch and pitch need checking. The scale pitch should be 15 as the Penman characters are thinner than the normal ones. Scale Pitch is set by selecting [f8] from your set-up or layout screen. This means you need to work out your margins using 15 characters to the inch. If you want a 1" left hand margin, you set the margin to 15 on the ruler line. Your right hand margin should be about 70, to give about an inch at the right.

To make Penman look right, you then select PS as the pitch you actually use in the document, either by setting that in [f4] in the layout or by putting in a +PS code at the beginning of the document. This may look odd on the screen, but will print out correctly

Dear Liz,
I own an Amstrad PCW 8256 and use LocoScript 1.
Once I have created a document with over 100 names, is it possible to then place them in alphabetical order?

Liz replies: Not really, I'm afraid. All of us long-time LocoScriptians have had this problem at some time and, although there have been some clever uses made of "Find and Exchange", there is no easy way round it.
There is only one real solution to this problem and that's LocoFile which solves it completely. I strongly recommend that you buy a copy and upgrade to LocoScript 2 at the same time. A bundle is now available which is much cheaper than buying them separately

Dear Liz,
I read your answer to the first letter in the March edition of 8000 Plus with interest. I have already tried to use continuous paper with a 9512 and a Star LC10 printer. I followed your own line of reasoning, and assumed that I wouldn't have to hand feed each sheet.

So far, I have met with limited success. I find that despite of following the instructions, I can't get a document printed in its correct place on the paper. On every occasion the printer performs several line feeds before printing, so that the bottom footer details are almost on the perforations. There's no problem with the 9512's own printer.

Are you able to tell me what I'm doing wrong please? Incidentally, exactly the same thing happens when I use my Star LC24-10 printer.

A The whole subject of printers is a minefield. Unless someone has actually used the exact combination of PCW, printer model, LocoScript version and printer driver type and version, it is impossible to give exact advice. I can make a few suggestions though. First, check the DIP switches on the printers, and the description of these switches in the printer manuals. You may find a switch called an auto line-feed or an auto carriage return. If so, whatever position it is in, try the reverse position. You can't hurt printer or computer by experimenting with these switches. The worst that can happen is that your documents won't print properly until you put things back the way they were.

It is also possible that you're not using the best printer driver and it is worth seeing if a better one is available in the Printer Support Pack.

Certainly, if you are using a 24-pin printer, you would benefit from using the 24-pin driver. This would let you use the printer in download mode, which allows you to print all the LocoScript characters and, as the printer is controlled by the computer when it is working in download mode, that would probably cure your problem anyway.

If experimenting with the switches and the printer driver doesn't work, then it is worth contacting Locomotive directly. They give excellent support for printers and update it all the time, producing new and improved printer drivers. However, I do know of other people using these printers without problems, so on balance I suspect that the settings of your DIP switches will be the cause of your problems.

GUIDED TOUR OF LOCOSCRIPT 2 – PART IV

[F3] FROM THE DISC MANAGER SCREEN

The [f3] function button on the Disc Manager Screen gives you a menu of all the actions you can carry out on a file.

COPY FILE Will make an exact copy of a file on to another part of the same disc, or on to a different disc.

To make a copy, first put the cursor on the file you wish to copy, then press [t3]. The cursor is already on the Copy file option, so you only need to press the [ENTER] key.

You will then get a message asking you to select the destination. The message does not remain on the screen, but if you look at the three status lines at the top of the screen, you will see the message repeated there.

It is possible to make a copy in the same group as the original, in which case all you need to do is press [ENTER] again, but if you do that, remember that you cannot have two files in the same group with the same name.

Normally, you would choose either a different group on the same disc, or another disc, usually a back up disc.

If you have a single drive machine, you have to copy the file to a group on the M drive, then put your destination disc in the A drive (remembering to press [f7] when you do so) and either copy or move the file now on the M drive to the new disc in drive A.

If you have a twin drive machine, you can copy a file direct from one disc to another, simply by moving the cursor to the destination group. (Use the [SHIFT] key plus the arrow keys.)

The commonest problem in copying files is when you are not actually copying the file you think you're copying! Many people think they should press [t3] first, then select the file they wish to copy. In fact, you have to put the cursor on the file first, then press [t3], then [ENTER] to confirm that you wish to copy a file. Then move the cursor to the destination and press [ENTER] again to tell the computer that you are ready.

You will then see a confirmation message which will summarise what you have asked the computer to do, showing the drive letter, group and name of the file, for both source and destination.

It is possible to alter details at this point. For instance, if you wish to make a copy of a file in the same group as the original, you can change the name of the copy here. Remember, you need to give it a unique name as you cannot have files with the same name in the same group.

MOVE FILE This works in exactly the same way as Copy file but it does not leave the original behind it. You will still have one copy of the file, but it will now be in your destination group and drive, and will have disappeared from the source group and drive.

ERASE FILE Erasing a file removes the file selected with the cursor. It is worth remembering that there may well be a limbo copy of the file as well.

If you do erase a file by mistake, (although LocoScript demands another [ENTER] as confirmation, before it actually erases the file) you may be able to get it back from limbo, though there are no guarantees.

If you are erasing a file for security reasons, then you should also make sure any Limbo copy is also erased, otherwise it will still be accessible to anyone who knows their way around LocoScript.

RENAME FILE This option allows you to give the file a new name.

RECOVER FROM LIMBO For accidentally erased files this option allows you to get a file back from limbo storage.

You cannot do so unless you have the option to Show Limbo files switched on. Press [f8] for Options and put a tick beside that option, using the [+] key.

Any limbo files will then be shown on the screen. If you try to edit a limbo file, you will not be able to. The file must be recovered from limbo before you can use it the normal way.

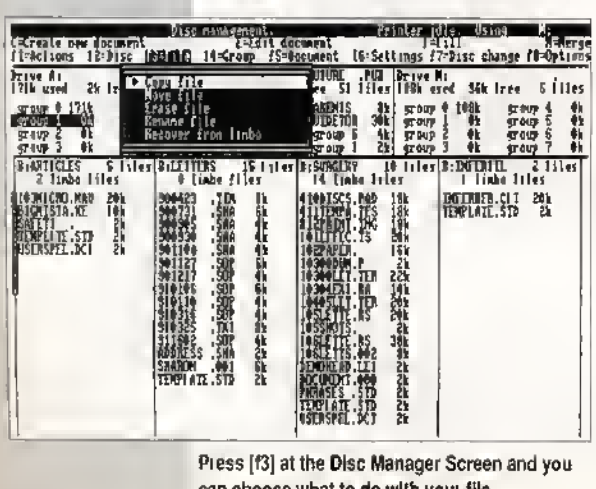
Limbo has caused some considerable confusion for people, and the best way of treating it is purely as an emergency restoration feature. Unfortunately, the limbo copy of a file may not be the same as the file you have accidentally erased

When you edit a file, the old version is what's stored in limbo, the new one is the ordinary file. However, the limbo file is still considerably better than nothing, but better yet is to make sure all files are properly backed up in the first place.

If you have only created a file and not yet edited it, there will be no limbo copy. The limbo storage area works on a first-in, first-out basis. So if you accidentally erase an old file, even though there may have been a limbo copy at some stage, there may not be any more.

All of which means that limbo is best left alone until the day you accidentally press [ENTER] twice and realise, as the machine buzzes, that the file it's obliterating is actually your only copy of the essay that's due in tomorrow morning.

At that point, with the cold sweat breaking out, you select the "Show Limbo files" option and pray that firstly, there will be a limbo copy, and secondly, that it will not be too different from your original.



Press [f3] at the Disc Manager Screen and you can choose what to do with your file

Over to You!

This is the part of LocoPlus written by the readers! Six invaluable tips to help you save time and effort in your word processing sessions

£20 WINNER

Quick start

The LocoScript manual tells us to make a Start of Day disc by copying Side 1 of the systems disc and erasing those files we do not require. This is tedious and time consuming, and usually involves erasing most of the files on disc. A quicker and easier way is to proceed as follows:

First format a blank disc, then with your systems disc (or a copy) in the drive select the f8 option. Press [+] followed by [ENTER] and four new files will appear in Group 0 with the letter H after their names. These are the files you need to start up your disc. Use f3 to copy these files across to the M: drive. The quickest way to the M: drive is to press [SHIFT] and the right cursor arrow twice. If you wish to retain any other files (such as PHRASES.STD) copy these across as well. Then remove the system disc from the drive and insert your formatted disc. Use f3 again to copy the files from the M: drive to the A: drive, this time pressing [SHIFT] and the left cursor arrow twice. Also copy any TEMPLATE.STD files you wish to retain. (These will already be in the M: drive.) When all the files you require are installed on your new disc, select f8 again and [·] the hidden files.

You probably realise that the above instructions refer to LocoScript 1.

Ann Lisle
Tyne & Wear

Address mark present

Stephen Date, in a letter you included in "Over to You!" (May issue) says, amongst other things, "Confuscious say: don't get rid of the typewriter, save it for the envelopes!" Stephen Date has, no doubt, been trying the User Guide's recommended method of transferring an address from letter to envelope via Direct Printing. He should know that Confuscious also said, "Man who messes with Direct Printing goes Loco." But he is not alone in finding difficulty in addressing envelopes with his PCW. I have recently received two letters from Future Publishing beautifully word-processor typed and both with handwritten envelopes!

With my PCW9512 I find no problem with addressing envelopes with the use of a Fill document.

Create a document which you could call "ENVELOPE.DL".

Now press **f2=Layout** and select "Change layout" [ENTER]; move the cursor along the top line from the default setting, which should be 10, to 18.

Now choose **f1=Margins**. Select "Set Left Margin", followed by [ENTER] and [EXIT].

Press the [RETURN] key 7 times to get to line 8, and type [+]m?;name[-]m. The characters you have printed should be highlighted in reverse. Now [EXIT] the document as usual.

After typing your letter, make a 'block' of the address. Select your ENVELOPE.DL document and press the F key to activate 'Fill'.

When document is displayed on screen with the cursor blinking at you, press PASTE folowed by the number you gave the block. Easy. After printing the address you will of course, have your ENVELOPE.DL document on disc for use again and again.

If the address was not put in letter then simply bring up the Fill document and type the address. Quicker than taking out the typewriter to do the job.

Arthur Gibberd
Coventry

A bold reverse

A couple of shortcuts for users of LocoScript 2.

You can put the code for bold type simply by pressing [+] and ENTER. Similarly you can remove it by pressing [-] and ENTER. What you are doing here is anticipating the setting and unsetting menus, where bold is the first item on the menu and is preselected for your convenience. This shortcut method is easier for uncertain typists than searching the keyboard for the B key.

To highlight text you can press [+] and M, and you can unset this with [·] and M. The M is for LocoMail, and even if you don't have LocoMail installed the screen will still highlight the text you have selected. this is two key presses as against the four normally required ([+]RV]ENTER]).

David Simpson
Lusaka, Zambia.

By any other name...

Two earlier correspondents (Roy Bealby and K Watson) in the May and June editions of 8000 Plus offer different methods of saving an edited document in LocoScript under a new name whilst retaining the original document.

Both methods are unnecessarily complicated. The simplest method is to use the f3 COPY facility before editing the document. When asked to choose destination for copied document press [ENTER] and when the small menu appears insert a new name for the copied document and then [ENTER] again. The copy will be stored on the same disc in the same group as the original which is probably where you need it in any case, and can then be edited without any risk to the original document.

G A Doyle
Wolverhampton

3 in 1

Here are 3 LocoScript tips:-

1. I have saved the bold headline instructions you gave in the January edition, as phrase 'H' –
(CR0)(+LSpace0)(+Bold)

(CEntre)(+Pitch17)(+PitchPSD)Headline (+Pitch17)

(CEntre)(+Pitch15)(+PitchPSD)Headline (+Pitch17)

(CEntre)(+Pitch12)(+PitchPSD)Headline (+Pitch17)

(-LSpace)(Bold)

When I want to use it, I can [PASTE][H], and then [EXCHANGE] 'Headline' for all the words I want to see in "Extra-bold".

2. I usually work with 1.5 line feed for each carriage return, but I often want to change this to 1 line feed, and then back to the original 1.5 setting.

I have [+CR0] and [+CR1.5] stored as phrases 'X' and 'Y'; so when I press [PASTE][X] or [PASTE][Y], the spacing changes.

When I call for 'Show Phrases', X and Z come up, to show that they are in use, but with no indication of which is which; so I have to remember.

3. I print most of my documents onto continuous paper. I used to find it was a chore to wind on exactly one page at the end of a section, in order to release the last page to be printed.

I now have a document saved in Group 0, called PAGEFEED.000. All it has in it is [ALT] [RETURN]. When I tell the machine to print this, it gives me an automatic page feed, while I tidy up my desk.

B J Murphy
Leicester

Highlights

I also have a tip you may like to publish sometime. When I type in my sermons, I have found that using the +RV code not only makes it easier for me to read (i.e. black on white, rather than white on black), but also makes it easier for me to judge soft hyphens etc. When I have finished, going back to the beginning and deleting the +RV code before doing a spell-check means that the progress of the spell-check can be followed as the reverse reservses itself! The spell-check stops at the beginning of words it wishes to query. If the +RV code is not deleted before doing the spell-check, the unknown words and typing errors are not highlighted, so make sure that it is deleted first.

Rev. Philip Clements-Jewery

Your turn!

Do you have any LocoScript tips that you want to pass on? Do you know something about LocoMail that nubody else does? Why not write in to us at Over to You, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. You could even stand to win £20 - so get tipping!

Mail Orders

Send a letter to Brezhnev and everyone else you know! Karen Donaghay teams up with LocoMail and LocoFile and produces mail by the bagful

There are two types of people in the world: those who write letters and those who don't. And if you fall into the latter category, then you will already know about the constant nagging from friends, relatives and sundry associates, who seem to expect the odd reply to their epic communiques.

Fair enough, you don't ask them to keep writing to you, and we all have an outstanding letter or two. But sometimes things can get out of hand. You know this is happening when your daily post reveals lines like: "Where are you? Perhaps the world was spinning too fast, and you fell off. Or maybe your postman missed out on a decent breakfast, and chomped his way through your mail instead? Or have you moved to the deepest Amazon jungle for which there is no forwarding address?"

At this point you know you are in danger of losing all of your friends and estranging your family forever. Something needs to be done. The trouble is that you have a hundred letters to write and you can only spare a couple of hours to do the work.

Read on and we will tell you how to deal with that backlog of letters in less than one hour.

But first things first. You wouldn't be reading a LocoFile tutorial if you didn't already have LocoFile. But have you heard of LocoMail? Did you know that the two programs can work hand in hand? If you missed out on this gem of a program then now is the time to reach into your wallet – because LocoMail combined with LocoFile and LocoScript is a wonderful sight to behold. And, working together, they can keep those pesky letters at bay.

Newcomers to LocoMail can obtain the program from Locomotive Software. The program is set up by following the menu stringently. Once installed the program becomes part of the LocoScript menu, just like LocoFile itself.

Then, all you have to do follow our simple steps to discover the cheat's guide to keeping in touch. Read on!

Mail storm

To invest in this speedy mailing system you will need the LocoMail program. It can be obtained from Locomotive software for the price of £35.19. Their address is Locomotive Software, Dorking Business Park, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1YL, or you can ring them on (0306) 740606 for more details

PROBLEM PAGE

Do you have a problem with LocoFile? Are those lengthy commands giving you a headache? Got a tricky situation you just can't figure out?
If so - let us know about it!

We will feature some of the most trying questions - and some of the easy ones too - over the next few months. The address to write to if you need help is: LocoFile Surgery, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Sorry, but we can't undertake to answer each of your letters personally.

STEP 1: THE ADDRESSES

This month's letter lout is Jack. He hasn't written to a soul in months, and has decided that it's high time to change his ways.

Let's take a look at a typical record in Jack's address file. It was set up using LocoFile, is called address.dat and it includes nothing very earth shattering. As usual, there is the name and address of each person. Because this is a mailing file the the one novelty is a salutation field. After all, it would appear rather strange for Jack to refer to his grandmother as 'Dear Mrs Burr', even if that is her name.

There is also space for the personal touch in the guise of a comments field. The main point of this is to allow Jack to write down a remark that he wants to direct at one particular person, rather than the world at large.

The first address in the file is Jack's ex-comrade in arms, a chap by the name of Thomas Anton. The personal comments section for Tom is a piece of office gossip that he is sure to find fascinating.

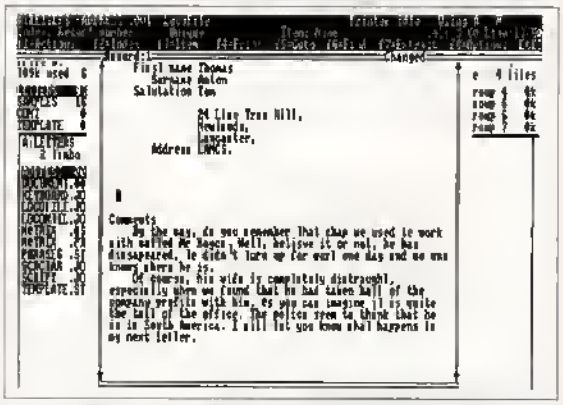
Likewise, there is a piece of pertinent family chit-chat in Grannie's comment field.

The comments field can be used in a variety of ways. Remarks can be jotted down in note form whenever inspiration occurs, and used as a memory jogger later.

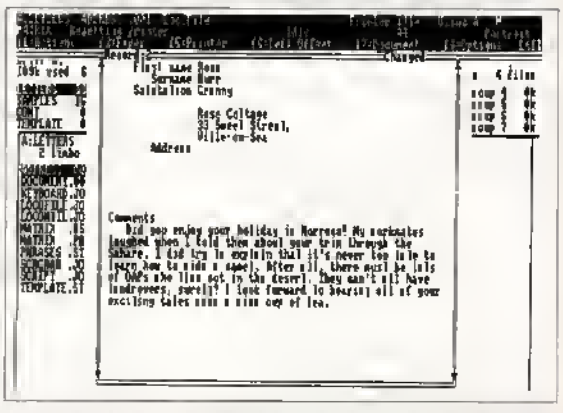
This is an ideal facility for the gradual letter writer; every time something interesting happens, the author can add to an existing collection of comments.

If you are more disciplined, all of the comments can be left blank until just before you carry out a mail merge and then filled in en masse.

Either way, it is these comments that will provide the personal touch and convince the recipient that the letter was written for their eyes only.



The comments section allows for information pertinent only to the recipient of the letter - in this case, some salacious gossip



Notice that the salutation field allows you to be a bit more familiar with your relatives at the start of your letters

STEP 2: THE LETTER

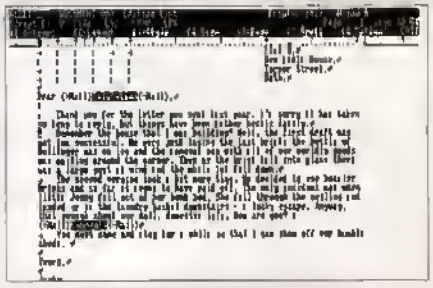
Now, this is where the cheating comes in. Think of all the things that you can tell everyone – from your mother to your best friend – with absolute impunity. And then write them down in a simple LocoScript letter. And then consider whether or not the recipients of such information are ever likely to compare missives. If so, stop here. If not, read on.

To illustrate the procedure at work here, we have chosen to recount the story of the house that Jack built, (as told by Jack) and called the document letter.mer.

As you can see from our screenshot, at pertinent points in the letter there are LocoMail commands. These are the highlighted words surrounded by the Mail codes.

To duplicate these in your own LocoScript letter document, type in the following:
Dear [+] [M] Salutation [-] [M],.

As you can see the keystrokes [+] [M] produces the {+Mail} command and the keystrokes [-] [M] produces the {-Mail} command. All of the text in between these two commands is automatically highlighted and is seen as an instruction to the LocoMail program.



The {+Mail) and {-Mail) codes are instructions for LocoMail to prepare the mail merge ahead

STEP 3: MERGING

Merging means exactly what it says. All of the records in Jack's address file are about to collide with his carefully worded letter. The result will be lots and lots of personalised letters and the principle is a very simple one.

Wherever there is a LocoMail command in the letter (such as the term Salutation) it should match a field in the address file.

The easiest way to understand what happens is to see it in practice. First, Jack needs to get ready to merge. You may have noticed that once LocoMail is installed there are two extra options on the Disc Management Screen: Fill and Merge. The one we are going to use is Merge.

To inform LocoMail of the intended files, Jack performs the following steps. The letter (letter.mer) is chosen first, by highlighting it with the cursor. Then he presses the keys [M] [ENTER] for Merge. A dialogue box appears and Jack is asked to choose the datafile by highlighting it with the cursor.

He called his address file Address.dat so he selects that file on screen and presses [ENTER]. The menu shown in our screenshot appears . If the details are all correct then press [ENTER] and the merge will begin.

INTO ACTION

This looks fairly impressive. The letter appears on screen, the cursor pauses briefly over the word Salutation before replacing the entire caboodle with the word Tom. Then it moves on to the command marked Comments and replaces that with a paragraph about the misdemeanours of a certain Mr Boyce.

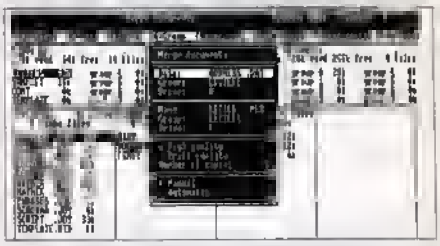
It shouldn't be difficult to figure out what is going on here. Basically, the Merge procedure will find the field within the address file that corresponds to the LocoMail command in the letter. So, when the Salutation field is found, it replaces the command with the contents of that field. Likewise, when the Comments field is found it picks up the entire paragraph and places it the letter.

Jack can then decide what he wants to do with the letter. A range of options appear automatically and he can pick any one of them. They are fairly self explanatory.

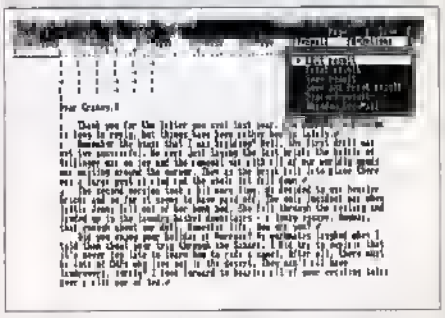
'Edit' Result is chosen if he wants to change the letter in any way. When he has finished editing he can produce the same range of choices by pressing [EXIT].

As for the other options, 'Print' result will print out the letter, 'Save' result will save it in a file and so on. If he does not need this particular letter, he can choose to 'Discard' result. This instructs LocoMail to throw away the letter.

Once a letter is printed out, saved or discarded, LocoMail goes on to the next record in the address file and repeats the process. It only stops when it reaches the end of the file or when you tell it to by choosing the option to 'Abandon LocoMail'.
What you are left with is a whole pile of letters.



The merging begins here. The manual option is chosen so that each letter can be edited if you wish



The result is a letter that Grannie is sure to treasure with all of the news and that little personal touch

Some of them will not contain any comments at all. Others will receive a highly personalised, detailed letter.

And Jack could become known es the most prolific writer in his social sphere.

HOW TO APPLY THE METHOD TO YOUR NEEDS

This month's rather frivolous dispatch has only scratched the surface of what can be achieved with a mail merge. A similar method could be used for a business mail shot. Or you could include a clever little routine that looks through your file, and only sends a letter to those people who live in Essex, for instance. There are many possibilities and all will be revealed in later additions of 8000 Plus.

If you want to adapt this technique to your own files then it should be very straight forward. You probably have a LocoFile with names and addresses already. The easiest way to use your existing file for mail outs is to tack two extra fields on to the end of your original set-up.

Load your datafile as usual by pressing [f1] and choosing the option to Run LocoFile. When the datafile is up on your screen, choose [f1] Datafile Set-up.

You will need create more space. Choose the Card option [f5] and add 10 lines to the card height (or more if you think you need it). Then move to the first free line and create your Salutation field by using the option to Create new item, [press [f3]]. Add your new Comments field in the same way. (Don't forget that the name of each field must be unique. If you already have a Comments field, then you should something else, such as Remarks.)

Once you have the two fields set up and filled in you can go ahead and write your standard letter following the same steps as Jack did. You will need to fill in all of the Salutation boxes within your address file, but the Comments box can be left empty if you wish.

TIP OF THE MONTH

You may notice that editing comments in LocoFile is fraught with peril. The program has an annoying habit of writing or deleting at a slightly slower pace than your fingers. You may think it is safe to hold down the delete key, but LocoFile may continue to delete characters long after you want it to stop.

One way of avoiding this labour-intensive editing is to keep your typing within LocoFile to a minimum. Rather than a full comment, keep short notes on what you wish to say.

For example, Grannie's comments could be reduced to "holiday in Morocco". Then, when you are ready to perform the mail merge, you can choose the option to edit the letter (Edit result) and pad out these notes in the usual way..

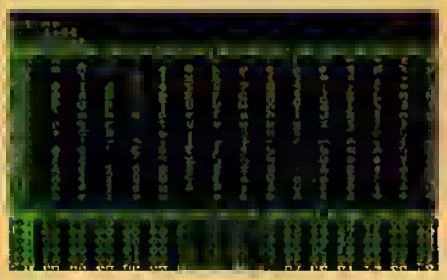
Soft Options

Part 1 of our Soft Options Surgery last month dealt with some of the on the disc. This month, Martin Le Poidevin delves even deeper, and

1. NEWCCP.

The Console Command Processor is the interface between you and your computer. When you talk to CP/M, you are in fact talking to the CCP: it is this program, loaded into memory every time you load CP/M, that interprets all your commands and sends them to the correct part of the computer until such time as another program (which you will have loaded) takes over.

It is the CCP, too, that stores CP/M's 'built-in' or 'resident' programs – programs which the computer can execute without referring to a disc. Normally there are four of these: DIR, TYPE, RENAME and ERASE (USER and x: are also available for changing groups and drives). NEWCCP.COM, however, adds another 21 commands to that list.



Some of the commands from NEWCCP. Charset prints out the complete character set presently recognised by the computer.

All of these are easy to use; some are more self explanatory than others. For instance **CLS** means "Clear Screen", and will do just that, **TIME** will tell you how long it is since you loaded CP/M, **SPACE** will tell you exactly how much space is left on your disc – a vital piece of information in many situations – and **GO AWAY** will remove NEWCCP from memory, leaving only the four resident commands which CP/M normally uses.

Some of the commands respond to 'toggles', and require a following + or – to turn the function either on or off. These commands are **INVERSE**, which will invert the output of the screen (from green/white letters on a black background to black letters on a green/white background), **24X80** which will reduce the size of the screen which CP/M works in to 24x80 characters – a smaller screen than normal – and **DISPLAY**, which, if toggled on, will report the name of the program being loaded. A final 'toggled' command is **CURSOR +**, which will turn the cursor on if it has been turned off by another program. You cannot turn the cursor off using NEWCCP.

Other commands delve deeper into the recesses of CP/M. **SCB** displays the contents of the "System Control Block", just in case you were wondering what was in it; **TPA** indicates how much space remains in the "Transient Program Area"; **DUMP** followed by a filename will give a HEX and ASCII readout of the file in question; and a useful suite of commands (**KEYDEF**, **TOKEN** and **CHARSET**) will redefine keys and ASCII codes for you.

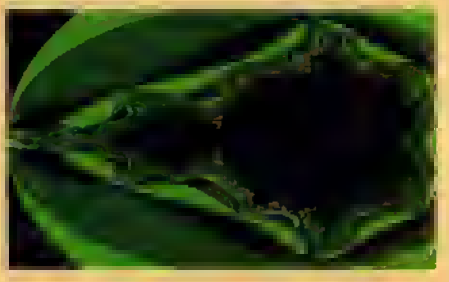
Of these, the most immediately appealing will be CHARSET, which displays the character associated with each ASCII number – vital for programmers.

NEWCCP, then, is a very useful program. There are a couple of things to watch, though: it does not work whilst most CP/M programs are actually running, it takes several kilobytes out of your TPA (which affects the amount of space available to BASIC, and may affect CP/M programs) and loading it up seems to have no effect. But having typed **NEWCCP [RETURN]**, try typing **HELP**. You should get proof that something is different!

2.MANDEL.BAS

Side one of the Soft Options disc contains the BASIC program 'Mandel', which will produce on your computer a version of the increasingly famous 'Mandelbrot' set – the unofficial logo for the new science of 'Chaotics'.

First published in 8000 Plus in April 1989 in a shortened form, it appears on the Soft Options disc as a complete program, ready to run. There is also a copy of the documentation (MANDEL.TXT). When you **RUN** the program, you will first be asked whether you want to (S)ave or (L)oad a file. For your first image, of course, you will have to choose the (S)ave the file.



The whole of the Mandelbrot set, at 40 iterations. You can save the image to disc, and then display it again later – perhaps as part of another program.

You will then be asked to define the portion of the set that you want to print to screen. One possibility for your first file is to produce an image of the whole set – set the values for X as -2 (minimum) and 0.5 (maximum) and for Y as -1.25 to +1.25. You can then decide which area to "home in on" for your next picture – and so on.

Because of the nature of the set, which is to produce an infinite amount of detail, it doesn't actually matter how small an area you choose. The level of detail on the screen will still remain the same.

The final parameter you will be asked to give is the 'Number of Iterations'. The larger the value you set, the more 'accurate' the final picture will be. On the other hand, the longer it will take to draw.

The program constructs the screen a line at a time (a line of pixels, that is, not characters, so that there are something like 250 sweeps), and each individual pixel (760 or so per line) has to be deliberated over. The greater the number of iterations, the more thinking that has to go on. All this means that the program can take a long time to run. In our tests, we left the machine to run overnight. And if all the pixels in your first few lines are adjudged to be 'off', then you will spend some time looking at a screen that does not appear to be doing anything. However, the program is working!

Other apparent errors can be caused by several reasons. It is possible to choose numbers that are too large for the computer to deal with, in which case you will get a 'subscript out of range' or 'overflow' error message. In these cases you will have to start again, with less ambitious parameters!

When the program has finished, you will be left with a file on disc. This file is a representation of the image that the computer has just built, and it can be loaded in again at any time, using the MANDEL program's (L)oad facility.

Unfortunately, the program does not have a print option. 9512 owners would not have been able to use this anyway, but 8000 series owners can get a 'screen dump' for permanent record by hitting **[SHIFT][EXTRA][PTR]** simultaneously. The screen dump mode should automatically turn itself off at the end of the screen 'page'.

Surgery

initial problems you encountered with loading and accessing the files

takes a detailed look at how to handle some of the programs on offer

3.DWBAS

One for the BASIC pundits, this. Perhaps the most annoying aspect of Mallard BASIC is the necessity of defining things like 'clear screen', 'print at', 'cursor on/off' and so on every time that you start a new program. DWBAS helps you to avoid this.

As the excellent documentation that accompanies the file explains, the program will load into BASIC, and sit there, carrying out these tasks and more besides with just a command of just a couple of characters.

There are two things to note about the program. Firstly, you must load it as **RUN DWBAS**. You do not need to load DW139 or DW145 yourself, the computer selects which one it needs automatically. If you do try to load these you will get an error message, and you will find that subsequent programs will also crash – however valid they are as MALLARD or even DWBAS programs.

The second point to note is that programs written using DWBAS commands must be run using DWBAS. Mallard BASIC on its own just won't understand #e. So if you are writing a program for a friend, make sure that they have the Soft Options disc, too!

A program written using DWBAS. The program LISTs itself, so you can see how it works!

4.NULU152.COM

This useful program will appeal to those who make a lot of use of CP/M. It allows you to build libraries of files, and then (if you wish) execute batch commands on those files. It also has the advantages of saving space on disc (files are normally 'padded' to fit the correct space – NULU.COM negates that padding) and in the directory.

Possibly the simplest use of the program is as a sort of 'SUBMIT' file, copying a bundle of files from the library on to the required drive, and then executing the main command.

First you will have to make your library. Let us suppose that you have a program – ZAPPER.COM – that requires several back-up files to go with it: Z1.DAT to Z7.DAT and ENDUP.COM. It is these that you wish to put into your library.

To create a new library you must open a non-existent one. Load NULU152 (**NULU152 [RETURN]**); you'll get a disc directory. The command list lives under '**-H**', so call that up just to see what is on it; all NULU main commands are prefixed with the hyphen.

The prompt is already waiting for an 'open file' command, so there is no need to issue one; instead, just type the name of the file you wish to create, prefixed by the drive and group you wish it to be on. By default, the program will not recognise the M: drive – we'll see a way round that later. So for a 'ZAPPIT' library on drive B:, type **B:ZAPPIT**. A '.LBR' file extension will be added by the program.

When you hit **[RETURN]**, the machine will beep because it has not found the file 'ZAPPIT.LBR', which is OK, because it does not yet exist. You are prompted for the number of entries (files) you wish to put in. Calculate this now, and enter it; when the confirmatory information comes up you will see that in fact the number of spaces NULU has made is larger than you specified – this is quite normal.

Now you will have to add members to this directory. Issue the command **-A**, and the prompt will change: put the disc with the files to copy from into one of the drives, and give details of the files to be included in the library.

When doing this, you can use wildcards such as * and ?; don't forget that the default drive is A0, which can be changed either by putting a specific drive name before the file, or by using **-U**. With the latter, make sure that you put a colon after the new drive name, for instance: **13B:**. In the case of the files we are dealing with, the copying commands will be **Z***. and **ENDUP.COM** or similar.

When you have completed the copying task, your new library is ready. Type **-C** to close it; the directory which is displayed should include all the files you have just added, and will give other information as well.

The next stage of the process will be to shift this whole set of files on to another drive. For this, you need to **Extract** the files on to a new drive: use **-E** for this, and give the command in terms of file=new drive. So to shift the whole library to drive B: user 5, use ***.*=b5:**. Individual files can also be moved this way (**Z*.DAT=b5:** or the like would not Extract ZAPPER and ENDUP), and renamed (**ZAPPER.COM=b5:Z.COM**).

Now, of course, you can use those files, or Extract from another library into the user group – there are many possibilities, most of them clear from the -H Help menu.

If your session has updated any of the library files, then these updated files must now go into the library. The way to do this is not to 'Add' them, but to 'Replace' them. To do this, reload NULU, open your library, and Replace (**-R**) the file, giving the drive as that of the updated file. And don't forget to close your library when you have finished – open libraries can easily get corrupted and become unusable.

You will probably have realised that the ideal way of using the program would be on a system with at least 2 drives. If M: is not recognised, then that becomes difficult for 8256 and 9512 machines! however, thanks to Mr J Baudiere of Toulouse (the French one), we can reveal how this can be achieved: using SID, change address 019B from 03 to 0D, and drive M: will be usable for a library.

One other option worth mentioning is the **-F** command, which will bring up a second menu. Using this menu you can deal with the members of libraries in much the same way as if you were using NSWP – batch copying, squeezing/unsqueezing, deleting, 'viewing' and many other options are available. As with NSWP, you can tag/untag files for batch operations as they scroll up the screen one at a time, or you can carry out the same operations on individual files.

If you would like further information the NULU152.DOC file is available on one of the Public Domain discs from PCW-World. Being a PD disc, the price is minimal – about £5.00 PCW-World can be contacted at Cotswold House, Cradley Heath, Warley B64 7NF, telephone (0384) 66269.

NULU in operation. The highlighted part towards the bottom of the screen is a Library directory – with information on file size and index reference.

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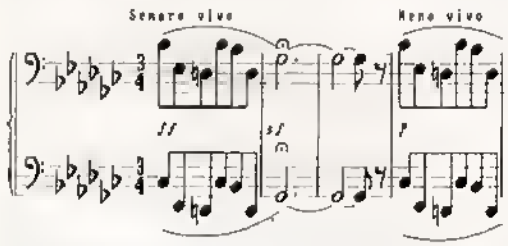

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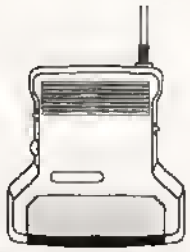

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The Press Gang

Tools of the trade; 90 PCWs help the students on City University's one-year journalism course towards their goal

In the heart of London, the PCW is busy helping young journalists to spread the news. Karen Donaghay investigates

Hugh Stephenson is a product of the old school of journalism. He jumped straight from the academic world to working for *The Times*. And in those days, you were thrown in at the deep end, always used a typewriter and regarded computers with a jaundiced eye.

"I was an absolute luddite, honestly," laughed Hugh. And it was a view he clung to despite a burgeoning career. Eventually he landed up in the hot seat: editor of one the best-known political magazines in England: *The New Statesman*.

But it wasn't to be forever. "Five years as an editor was enough," he said. He announced that he was leaving the magazine world and would spend his time writing books. The big day came and his colleagues presented him with a token of their esteem. But the box was far too large for the customary gold watch. Sure enough, inside was a parting gesture to a terrified recipient. A PCW.

But Hugh was not to be deterred. "Six months later, I had absolutely no problems with my machine," he said. Not surprising. It was still in the box, untouched by human hand and unadorned by the humble plug.

It took a change of scene to break down the last bastions of Hugh's resistance. A professor of journalism at London's City University simply can't be seen to rely on a typewriter; and such a professor is exactly what he went on to become. The college approached him, he accepted and now the PCW is the focal point of his office.

Behind him, on another table, sits a reminder of the past: an antique typewriter: one of those bulky, black affairs with polished keys. "It's the only one left in the building," Hugh said fondly. "We have a total of 90 PCWs."

It sounded like a case of game, set and match to the PCW. But the transition was not an easy one, as Hugh recalled.

The changing face

"In the early days we had a New Technology Committee. It met every Thursday. And every Thursday we used to say, next Thursday we will make a decision. And every Thursday came and

A JOURNALIST IN THE MAKING

Journalism is often seen as a glamorous and exciting profession. There is fierce competition for a dwindling number of jobs and the post-graduate course is one way of getting a firm foot in the door.

The one-year post graduate course falls into three classes: newspaper, periodical and broadcast journalism. They have 600 applicants every year and accept only 85.

But how can one tell the potentiat journalist? Is there a certain demeanour, a selient property that they all possess?

"I don't know the answer," insisted Hugh. "Journalists come in all shapes and sizes. I don't think there is any one quality: you just recognise the good ones when you see them." He paused for thought. "Ah, yes. They do need to able to type these days. Whereas ten years ago you could type very badly, now direct inputting makes accurate typing much more important."

But surely, there must be more to it than that? For instance, Hugh is obviously a skilled journalist himself. Where did he think that his own strengths lay? There was a pause while Hugh struggled to overcome his natural modesty.

"I like the detective element," he told us. "If somebody says something that doesn't square with what they said a month ago, I can usually sense that there is a story there."

'What you have to do is use the facts available. As a journalist the jigsaw is never finished, but then you have to say what the picture is." So can this be taught? How does one sharpen the wits of a budding hack?

"We play games with facts," he explained. "Most people from a university background tend to assume that a fact is a fact." And of course every journalist knows that this is not the case. Hugh cited a textbook example.

"Imagine five people observing a motor accident. Take them away and ask them what happened and you will find that the answers could be completely different."

They also try to get their students to stop thinking in academic terms and start thinking, and writing, in a journalistic fashion. "What they don't realise at first is that the big, grand things in journalism are easy to do. It is the small things that are much more difficult. They can all write a 1500 word feature on the British education system. But what they can't do, or what they find more difficult, is to write a good story in two paragraphs."

But there is no substitute for hands-on experience and all of the students are given a gruelling schedule to stick to. Their work is dissected by the tutors: subbed, analysed for content and so on. Questions are asked. How did you get this story? Why did you choose to follow this engle?

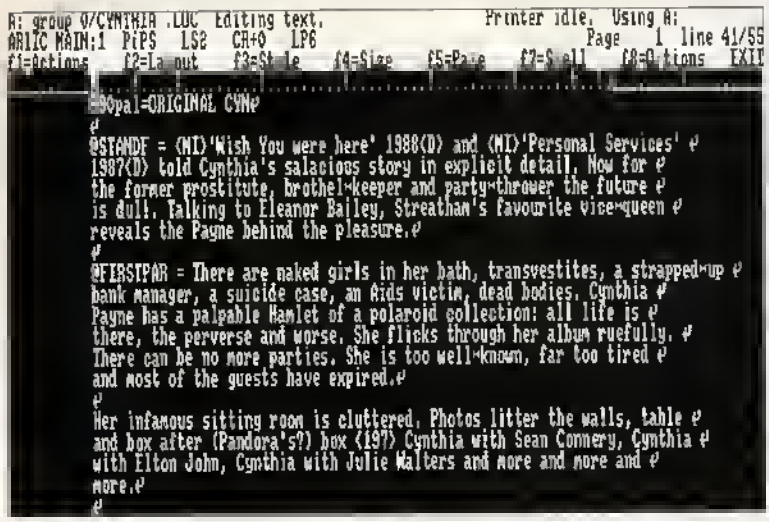
And, at the end of it all, the course hopes to produce a well-rounded and employable journalist, ready to take on a job market that is in a state of flux.

Hugh admits that the easy days of journalism are now at an end. "The last five years have been exceptional," he said. "The explosion in media employment has been phenomenal, particularly in magazines. But now the feast is over." As a result, Hugh thinks, training is more important than ever. "The school acts as a filtering process," explained Hugh. "Without specific training it is hard to fathom who is likely to do well." With a year's writing behind them, the students of City University are certainly off to a flying start.

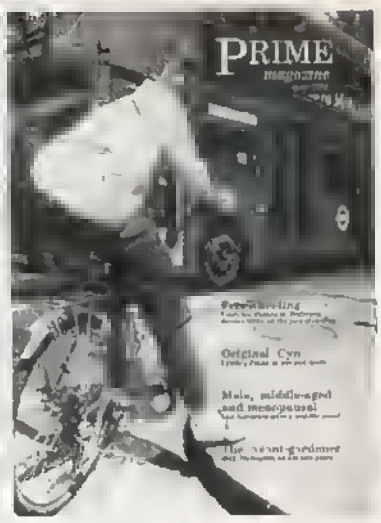
Work course

The one year journalism courses at City university are open to all graduates. More details of the courses they provide can be obtained from the Graduate Centre for Journalists, City University, Northampton Square, London, EC1V 0HB.

HOW THE STUDENTS USE LOCOSCRIPT



This is an article which is being prepared for one of the students' in-house magazines, Prime. It is at the planning stage, with the structure of the article gradually forming



The final article is advertised on the cover of April 1991's *Prime* magazine

The magazine on the right hand side is called *Prime*. There is nothing particularly unusual about the pages within: you could find many similar ones by flicking though the wares of any newsagent. The only distinction is that this magazine cannot be found in the shops. It is strictly a student production.

The article shown in the screenshot was written by Eleanor Bailey, a student on the periodical course at City University. The text is written in LocoScript and the codes that you can see on screen denote the different styles and sizes of text.

For example, the heading of the article is marked by the code @90pal = and the next part of text is marked by the code @standf = meaning stand-first. @FIRSTPAR = marks the first paragraph. When the article is transferred to the PC this paragraph will be displayed in a certain style – with the first character being produced as a `drop cap`.

It is then transferred over to the PC (using a communications package and an RS232 cable) and the text is "flowed" into the page. The college will soon be switching to LocoLink for these transfers as it allows you to transfer more than one article at a time.

The resulting page will be designed using the PC's DTP program, Ventura.

ended in a greater state of confusion." At long last, after a seemingly never-ending sequence of meetings, inspiration struck.

"I had a sudden flash. It is the only decision I have ever made that I know was absolutely right. We had to get rid of the typewriters. And I suddenly realised – this is not a desk top publishing course. Nor is it a system's operating course. This is a journalism course. And journalism is something that goes on in the mind; not in the fingers. The basic principles could be taught on an PCW, just like my own, for £299."

And that was exactly what they did. The college has done much to swell the coffers of Alan Sugar's empire – as we were about to find out. On a trip down the hushed corridors of academia, we were led through a fanfare of doors and into the creative hub of the building.

It was quite a sight. A large room revealed wall-to-wall PCWs. So many screens in one place created an almost hypnotic effect. This was where the students typed in their assignments.

And woe betide the student who tries to follow in Hugh's early footsteps. Any pleas of techno-phobia are given short shrift. "From day one, we don't accept any work that is untyped," said Hugh. "We have teach-yourself-typing programs on the PCW. Students are given one of those and told to go away and practice."

This heartless approach appears to work, since most students learn how to use the PCW remarkably quickly. In fact, their reaction to LocoScript is, as Hugh told us, "universally positive".

To print out their articles, once again, the PCW is the perfect solution. With over 100 students the last thing the college wanted was a shared printer: the queues would have been enormous. With the PCW, each student can use their own built-in printer.

Into print

But there is also an alternative to the dot-matrix printout. Down another corridor, and behind locked doors this time, lies the secret to professional looking newspapers and magazines. It is, of course, a desk top publishing system. The one they chose to use is called Ventura and it runs on a PC.

Hugh Stephenson: "Journalism is something which goes on in the mind, not the fingers"

Hugh told us how it worked. "They all write on their Amstrads. You can have sixty students writing sixty stories."

He points to one lonely PCW in the corner of the room, with a cable running between it and the PC. As he explained, each story can be saved on to a PCW disc and then brought in here, and sent via the cable to the PC and the prepared page. But why, we wondered, is this efficient system hidden away behind closed doors?

Hugh puts it down to the keenness of his students. "There's a terrible danger that they will become hypnotised by desktop publishing and sit here all day, manipulating copy."

It is a huge thrill for the students to see their work on the finished page, but setting it up is not regarded by the college as a key skill.

In fact, sometimes they even revert to the manual method of page layout, known as 'cut and paste'.

"The reason is," said Hugh, "that on-screen only one person can do the work. If you're doing cut and paste you can lay out a page more easily and quickly, so ten people can produce five different tabloid layouts in half an hour."

But it is the finished product that really impressed us. The student magazines and papers are extremely readable. They cover a wealth of topics, from the reformed life of Cynthia Payne to the benefits of baby massage.

And, once again, the humble PCW finds itself playing a key role in spreading the word! ●

Jargon Buster

Angle: Journalists are taught to look for an angle for every article or story. This gives the writer the basic slant of the piece

Copy: Any text that is intended for publication

Cut and paste: The manual method of laying out a magazine or newspaper page, by literally sticking articles down on a template

Direct inputting: The process whereby the story is typed directly into a laid-out page on a DTP system

Drop cap: The large character used by many magazines at the beginning of an article – like this one, for instance!

Strap: A short piece of copy underneath the article heading, (see ours underneath the headline on the opposite page) designed to tempt the reader into reading the complete article. It is also known as a stand-before or a stand-first

Subbing: The process that takes copy in a stage where it is ready for publication. It should fit into the space on the page, be free of spelling and grammatical mistakes and make sense to the reader

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The Good Club & Training Guide

Clubs

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Enterprise Social Club, 17 Nunnery Lane, York (address for meetings only)
Enquiries:Simon Williams 0906 40164

Scotwest.PCW
19, Portion Phure, Old Greenock Road, Bishopton, Scotland
Enquiries: Iain Lang 0505 863916

Ground Floor User Group
Halme Street, Hebden Bridge West Yorkshire
Enquiries:Jae Campbell 0422 844991

CP/M and MS DOS User's Group
11 Hazlemere Road, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 5ET
Enquiries:David Nesbitt 0753 866854

Hampshire PCW User's Group
Unit 5, Cable Street, Northam, Southampton, Hampshire (address for meetings only)
Enquiries: Paul Day *(above address)*

Hereford Computer Club
18 Church Street, Hereford Herefordshire HR1 2LR
Enquiries: David Rose 0432 267123

Teesside Amstrad User Group
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The Worldwide Amstrad Computer Club (WACCI)
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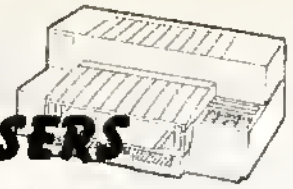

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Growing Pains

The PCW8256 can now rival the more expensive 8512. And all for a bargain price. Karen Donaghay finds out how.

Pro habit

The Pro 8256 with 256K of extra memory costs £88.12 from SCA systems. On the other hand, if you want even more memory you can buy a Pro8256 with 512K or 768K for £111.62 and £135.12 respectively. SCA Systems can be contacted at 61 Ferringham Lane, Ferring, Worthing, West Sussex BN12 5LW, telephone (0903) 700288.

In most families, the youngest child is always considered the baby, no matter how long in the tooth that 'child' becomes. Or at least this is how the theory goes.

And the same could be said of the PCW clan. The junior status of the 8256 can never be completely forgotten – it is even part of its name. With only 256K of memory it will always be compared to the 8512 and the 9512, both with 512K under their belts.

SCA Systems' Pro 8256 gives your PCW8256 extra speed, a larger memory, and more flexibility. But how? Read on...

Yet the smaller memory is a good reason for buying the 8256. Although it makes it the 'baby of the family' (quite a paradox, given that it was the first to arrive), it also helps to make it the cheapest of the three PCWs. But there are drawbacks. It is a sad fact that many 8256 owners are haunted by regrets. These are the people who crave for the extra memory of an 8512 or 9512. Such symptoms usually begin as the unsuspecting user branches into programs such as LocoSpell. They find that all of a sudden the extra memory would be of great benefit. So, short of rushing out and buying another machine, what should they do?

One solution is a new product from SCA Systems called Pro 8256. It is a clip-on device that promises to transform the baby of the PCW family overnight. How? By giving it the same amount of memory as a PCW 8512.

Growing up

It is a common misconception that more memory will make everything faster and better. It would be nice if this were true, but in reality it is not the case. What it does do, however, is allow certain programs to work more effectively.

LocoSpell is a prime example. Although it can look up thousands of words in a dictionary, this is an exhausting task for the PCW and it takes a long time. If the dictionary is transferred to the PCW's temporary memory bank (otherwise known as the M drive) it will work much faster. And this is where the 8256 owner may run into a few problems.

The spare room

This dictionary is big. It may not fit on the M drive at all. Or, if it does, the amount of space left over could be so small that there is barely enough room to swing a sentence, never mind a lengthy document.

So the 8256 owner has to resort to other means. The large dictionary has to be kept on disc – making it far slower – or the other files could be deleted from memory – not a happy state of affairs. Many people might decide not to bother, or to use the smaller dictionary instead.

And this is just one example. Lots of CP/M programs demand large amounts of memory. Desk Top Publishing programs only produce their best work in a large space. For example, Micro Design cannot work on a high-resolution A4 page with the 8256: there simply is

QUESTION TIME

Q. Why are the ports called parallel and serial ports? And what is the difference between them?

A. As their names suggest, the parallel and serial cable send information in different ways. Parallel cables send signals down a number of lines at the same time. The serial cable sends all of its information down one line. If you have a choice between using the parallel or serial cable it is therefore speedier to use the parallel cable, and it is the most suitable for external printers.

Incidentally, just to confuse the issue even further, parallel ports are often referred to as centronic ports. Even more common is the term RS232 port, which means the same as serial port.

Q. Can the Pro 8256 be used to help me send information between different types of computer?

A. Yes it can. You will need to use attach a serial cable between the two machines. The information is then sent down the cable using a comms program such as Dial Up. You will also need a suitable comms program to receive or send information at the other end. Dialup costs £72.40 from PMS Communications, (021) 6437688.

It can also be used to connect many other weird and wonderful devices, such as a speech synthesiser. And we didn't just make that up – SM Engineering can make your PCW talk for £49.95 including VAT. They can be contacted on (0323) 766262.

Q. How much are all the cables going to cost me? I don't want to be lumbered with expensive, hidden extras.

A. Cables come fairly cheaply from most computer stores. The price of a cable is between £10 and £15 and both cables can be plugged into your Pro 8256 and used at once.

Q. Are there big savings to be made by getting the parallel/serial interface and the extra memory all in one package? And if so, how much?

A. Pro 8256 is excellent value for money. The Pro 8256 with 512K costs £111.62 (including VAT). To buy a 512K SCA Rampac (without the ports) costs £104.58. And a serial/parallel interface from the same company costs £49.

So, it is far cheaper to go for the all-in-one solution. The only real advantage of buying two stand-alone products is that they both provide a through port so that other devices can be attached.

Q. Is it possible for me to use the Pro 8256 on other PCWs?

A. No, unfortunately this product is currently limited to the PCW8256. However, there is a similar product for the 8512 and 9512 in the pipeline. Watch this space!

HOW TO USE PRO8256

1. The Pro8256 is simply slotted on to the back of the PCW via this connector. It provides 256K of extra memory

2. The serial port allows you to attach all sorts of add-ons from the speech synthesiser to the modem

3. The parallel port can be used to connect a new printer to your PCW

The installation of Pro 8256 works like a dream. All you need to do is turn off the PCW and unplug it. Pick up Pro 8256 and plug it on to the expension port at the back of your machine. And that's it. It takes all of three seconds.

To make sure that your Pro 8256 works, you should then boot up as normal using a CP/M disc. Instead of the normal CP/M heading, which says that you have a 112K drive M, it should now say that you have 368K. The effect of the larger M drive depends on the programs you use. Those that need lots of memory, such as Micro Design and LocoSpell, will show the most pronounced improvements.

As for using the parallel and serial ports, our advice is not to delve too deeply into the manual unless you really have to. It deals with the minutiae of how the interface works – very commendable, but to most people it will sound like double Dutch. Phrases like "Data Carrier Detects" and "Handshaking" are merrily bandied around, yet the chances are that you will never actually need this level of information.

Basically, to install a printer you will need a PC printer cable. This plugs into the parallel port of the Pro 8256. The other end plugs into the printer itself. You can buy this type of cable from most computer shops. In addition you need a new printer driver for each program you use. These are either built into the program or bought separately.

For example, to connect and use a DeskJet printer with LocoScript 2, you have to buy a printer driver pack, and then install the DeskJet printer driver according to the manual. On the other hand, to attach a modem to your PCW you will need a serial cable to plug into the modem at one end, and the serial port of the Pro 8256 at the other.

You can alter the rate at which information is sent down the serial cable. This is called the baud rate and the default set is 9600 baud. If you want an easy life, then you can stick with this rate, setting the switches on your modem to run at the same speed. If the modem will only operate at a slower rate, 1200 for instance, you can set the rate within CP/M by using the command SETSIO 1200.

This is just one of the tricks detailed in the manual. Others include how to get your modem working when all else fails. Other tips cover topics like redirecting your printouts. So, if you are using BASIC and want to use your new printer then you can type in the command DEVICE LST = CEN.

not enough room to store it. The options left are to produce either a smaller page or a page of lower quality. And while we are on the subject, let's not forget Flipper – it can split your PCW into separate parts. The newest version of Flipper refuses to work on an unexpanded 8256 at all. Yet, once Pro 8256 is fitted, Flipper can operate quite happily.

So it would be fair to say that with more memory, the 8256 draws level with its cousin, the 8512. But Pro 8256 still has one more card up its sleeve.

The larger picture

Pro 8256 has both a serial port and a parallel port built-in to the side of the box. This may not sound exciting but it allows you to do all sorts of interesting things with your PCW. Like add a new printer: anything from a laser to a tiny bubblejet. Or you could make your entrance into the wider world by adding a modem to your PCW. In fact every PCW add-on that does not come with its own interface will need to be attached via one of these ports. That makes it pretty useful stuff to all keen PCW users.

These ports are regarded by SCA Systems to be one of the biggest selling points of the package. And they are right. Without these standard ports a lot of add-ons are ruled out. But given that this product is so well planned it is surprising to come across a fairly major flaw.

The Pro 8256 lacks a through port. A through port is a replica of the expansion port at the back of your PCW, and it means that another clip-on product can be added later, stacking them up at the back of the machine.

Take, for instance, the Kempston mouse. It must surely count as one of the most useful aids for a DTP program. Extra flexibility, more creative scope – the benefits are well known to those who have invested in a mouse. This is all very well; but Pro 8256 would be equally welcome to a memory-hungry DTP package. So it is annoying to find that you cannot use both of these products at the same time. Neither the Kempston mouse nor Pro 8256 have a through port. This means you can only attach one or the other.

These criticisms aside, the Pro 8256 is a good product. It also coincides with a huge price reduction for the 8256. Of course, in some ways it is all old hat: extra memory is nothing new and interfaces are as old as the PCW itself. The major difference is that this package has put the two together at a very reasonable price.

Deciding factor

As such it is pretty solid stuff. It gives you 256K of extra memory, and you can attach new printers or add-ons to your PCW. Admittedly, many people could read this review and still not understand why more space is a useful thing.

And if this is the case then they obviously don't need it. It's rather like the difference between living in a flat and living in a house. If you don't need extra space and you can survive quite happily without a garden, there's little point investing in the extra expense for a larger residence.

But for those who feel that the 8256 is cramping their style then this could be a golden opportunity. The Pro 8256 has to be one of cheapest and easiest ways of solving two problems in one fell swoop. And it could make an awful lot of babies grow up in a hurry. ●

Drive on!

If you are thinking of using an external printer with your PCW, you will need to make sure that you have the correct driver for the printer you choose. Locomotive Software produce a complete printer support pack, which contains all the drivers you are ever likely to need! The pack costs £29.50, and is available from Locomotive at Dorking Business Park, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1YL, telephone (0306) 740606.

In the meantime, if you are thinking about investing in an alternative PCW printer, why not turn to this month's cover feature on page 10? We've got a handy guide to choosing and using external printers, and there's more information on those mysterious printer drivers, too.

Pro 8256

Pluses
- ▲ Good value
- ▲ Easy to connect
- ▲ Very useful

Minuses
- ▼ Complicated manual
- ▼ No through port

Features	4/5
Documentation	3/5
Performance	5/5
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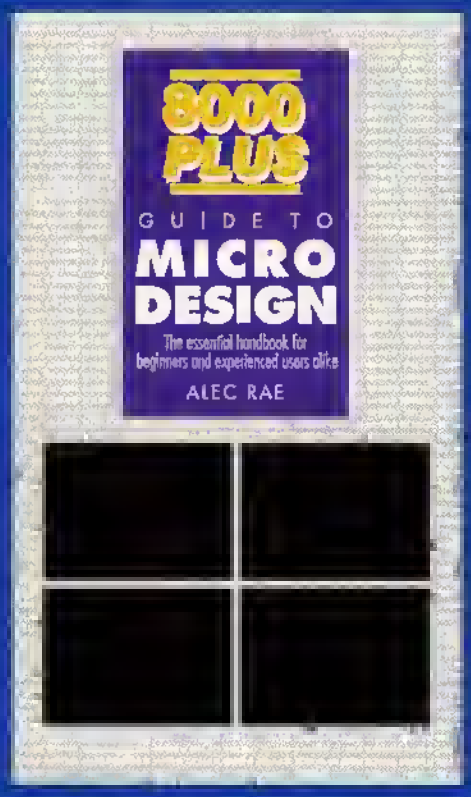

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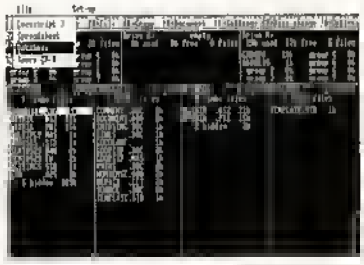

The all-new Flipper 3 can do everything Flipper 2 Plus could, and a whole lot more besides. Why just divide your PCW in two? If you've got enough memory, Flipper 3 can split your machine into as many as eight separate sections, each one of them a complete CP/M or Locoscript 2 set-up, and each one just seconds away.

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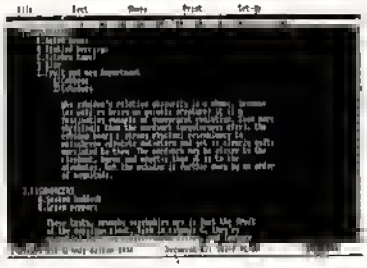

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Flipper 3 and Foreword both require at least 512K of memory. To use the programs together, or with non-legal CP/M programs like Mini Office and MicroDesign II, extra memory is essential. Both programs support current versions of Locoscript 2 - v2.15 or later - and all versions of CP/M. Hard drives, non-standard disk formats and foreign-language keyboards may cause problems - please check before ordering.

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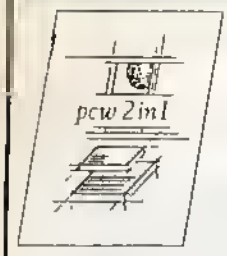

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Box of Tricks

Alec Rae casts his eye over a brand new utilities disc from Creative Technology - and shows you how to use it with Micro Design

MD Utilities Disc
£19.50 ● Creative Technology
(0889)567160

The major problem with reviewing a package like Creative Technology's Utilities disc is finding a way to describe it. There are utilities for speeding up the printing of MicroDesign 2 and ProScan pictures if you have an external printer (as expected there is absolutely nothing they can do to speed up the poor old internal PCW dot matrix).

There is an extremely clever package to alter and distort images you have created in MicroDesign 2. And there is even a little program to speed up the process of formatting discs.

Each of these features is very useful in itself. But you have to admit that they do make a rather strange mixture on one disc.

For instance if you have an external printer (especially useful for a 24-pin dot matrix or a inkjet or laser printer, where the time savings are more marked) you will probably consider this a must.

The time taken to print out pages in MicroDesign 2 was always one of the major drawbacks of the program. Now with the new print drivers cutting the print time for 24-pin printers in half and desk jet and laser printers taking only a third of the time, the program becomes a really practical tool.

Even savings of more than a third of the time on 9-pin dot matrix printers are not to be sneezed at.

But does that mean that people still plodding on with the old PCW printer are losing out? Well it must depend on how you use MicroDesign 2.

Filling the gaps

This collection of utilities has obviously come about from Creative Technology looking at some of the less stunning aspects of a program like MicroDesign 2 and trying to fill in the gaps to make the perfect product.

If you are using the graphic capabilities of MicroDesign 2 to anywhere near their full potential you may have been slightly frustrated that you can't do those last little details that would make mastheads, logos and badges really impressive.

It's not that the program is limited compared with similar CP/M programs. It's just that, up until now, PCWs didn't seem to be able to provide these little extra touches.

The limitation is usually most noticeable with text. You can write text in a nice neat line. But often, a badge will require text curving round the top or the bottom.

Or perhaps you simply wanted to have some text at an angle across the page?

With some graphics packages you can rotate text or images at right angles but how about a utility to allow you to rotate an image to any angle you want? Or you may want to reverse an image giving yourself a mirror image.

These are the sort of things you would want to do if you were drawing on a piece of paper.

Flight of fancy

Certainly anyone who has felt the need for any of these relatively simple features would certainly appreciate Tweak. But once the programmers at Creative Technology started on creating these obvious features they seem to have been carried away in flights of fancy that have produced a remarkable list of utilities.

The list has become so remarkable that it is, at times, quite difficult to describe. It includes features like Twist, where you can twist images as if you were twisting an image printed on a ribbon. It is a fascinating idea.

Or how about Wave, where you can curve the straight edges of an image into a sinewave shape (in simple terms what you are doing is making it look as if your image is printed on a flag that is blowing in the breeze - but sinewaves sounds so much more technical).

There are relatively simple ones like Fatten which just adds several layers to the lines of your image making it fatter.

This is given a clever twist out in Outline which carries out the same process as Fatten and then simply copies the original image on to the fattened image in EXOR mode. This simply makes the original image disappear leaving only the outline.

Varied choice

The choice is wide and varied. There is no way even to generalise. Some utilities work well with headline text, some work better with graphics.

This is perhaps the one of the few weaknesses of the program. Some of the terminology used in setting up the more complex utilities could have been simplified. For instance, in Twist you have to chose the number of twists that you want in the image. One twist is 360 degrees. Twelve twists are 4320 degrees. It could surely have been possible to simplify this sort of detail. Similarly the features have, at times, become so complex that they are difficult to explain how to use effectively. There are some pretty complex ideas to get across and it is not always true that the manual manages to get these ideas across as clearly as you might want.

Having said that it might just be that it isn't possible to put these ideas down on paper. It is actually easier to experiment and see what happens. This is by far the simplest way to see what the program can actually do.

And here we hit on another problem. Some of the features (most notably the Circle command - curving the image into a circle) can be mind-numbingly slow. If you have a big file to modify it is sensible to have something else to do while it's working - for instance you could read War and Peace.

You have been warned

However, Creative Technology have realised this and do give you plenty of warning. They give you lots of on screen information about how much work needs to be done and how much has been done. This allows you to work out how long a job is liable to last and terminate it if it is just going to take too long.

But perhaps the most interesting thought is that you can use several of the utilities on the same image. Once you start thinking along these lines the possibilities become endless.

As usual Creative Technology have applied high standards of professionalism to the installation. You can install Tweak and the print drivers on your working copies of MicroDesign 2 and ProScan with the minimum of effort - and virtually no chance of making a mistake.

After these utilities the speedy disc formatting seems a rather strange afterthought. Admittedly it is a handy little tool, speeding the tedious process of formatting considerably - especially doing away with all those Diskit menus and all that nonsense about taking discs out of the drives.

If you are prepared to risk missing out the error checking it can be even faster and it can be used with a submit file to allow you to carry out the work with the absolute minimum of effort.

The utilities disc is a well thought out project, and will do much to improve your (Micro) design prowess. The only problems are that you seem to lose 1k of storage space, you can't use the disc for a start of day disc and it is very difficult for 8000 Plus reviewers to explain how is fits in with the other utilities. ●

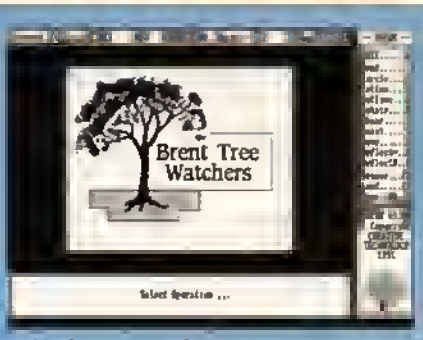
MD Utilities Disc

Pluses
- ▲ Print drivers speed the slowest part of using MD2
- ▲ Tweak gives you a fascinating choice of graphic utilities

Minuses
- ▼ Some Tweak utilities are very slow
- ▼ Some of the settings could have been simplified

8000 *PLUS*	
Ease of use	4/5
Range of features	5/5
Documentation	4/5
Performance	4/5
Value verdict	17/20

1 Starting up



2 Using the disc

3 The Outline facility

1 Although Tweak's layout is similar to MicroDesign 2 and ProScan there are significant differences.

For instance you don't look for files and load them in the same way as with the other programs.

You still press (f1) but this time it asks you for a file name or (for what us real computer buffs call) a search string.

If you want to see all the files on a disc in drive B with the extension .MDA (in other words, area files created in MicroDesign 2) you would type B:*.MDA.

The star is called a wildcard. It can represent any file name or even any part of a file name. If you want to see all the Cut files you would type in B:*.CUT - all the files on the disc B:*.*.

Of course, as you don't actually create anything in Tweak, (you merely modify something you have created elsewhere) you have to load a file before you can start.

2 Another change is that the program doesn't plonk your file in the middle of a whole, blank page the way the others do. Instead, it shows you the file that you are working on, the whole file and nothing but the file.

If it is larger than could normally be seen on a MicroDesign 2 screen it will be reduced accordingly to fit.

You will see the actual measurements and what scale the illustration is reduced to shown above the picture. In this case it is at a ratio of 2:1.

All the commands for the collection of utilities are listed in the box down the right hand side of the screen.

In this case, we are going to use Outline (you will need to press [O]). This is a utility that blanks out the original image leaving just an outline.

When you are prompted, choose a name (and drive) for the file to hold the modified image.

3 Outline actually uses a process similar to another utility Fatten, which, surprisingly enough fattens the image. You have a choice of three different thickness settings. In this case we chose number three - the thickest.

The difference is with Outline that the program also copies the original image on to the fattened version in EXOR mode - this reverses the colour of any pixel it lands on, so the original picture disappears completely.

Some of the operations can take a bit of time - especially if you are working with a big file. This one, a relatively quick operation - took nearly 10 minutes.

Luckily Tweak always gives you a clue as to how long things will take. For instance, in this one, it shows you how many lines it has to modify and what line it is working on. This means that you can work out roughly how long the whole operation will take.

4 Selecting the utility

5 Shaping the cylinder

6 Preparing an image

4 Choosing the right picture for the right utility is important. Some very complicated images can get really difficult to recognise once they have been messed about with.

Text is normally a good subject for tweaking - although it has to be big enough and bold enough to recognise easily. Headline text has great potential, but ordinary body copy would just become impossible to read.

Some features are shown to best advantage when the image is surrounded by straight lines.

This gives a far better idea of the way in which the picture has been adjusted.

This time we have chosen a simple text logo with a grid of straight lines to show off the abilities of the Bend feature.

The best way to understand how this works is to imagine that the image is on a piece of paper that can be wrapped round a cylinder.

5 The cylinder can be horizontal (lying on its side) or vertical (standing on its end). Choose [H] or [V] as required. You can also choose how far the image is wrapped round the cylinder.

This is worked out by choosing a number of degrees between 0 and 180. Obviously, if you choose 180 degrees, then the top and bottom of the original image will start to disappear round the back of the cylinder.

You also have to choose the end rounding. To understand this you have to consider how you would see a cylinder. If it were angled in one direction (a positive figure in degrees) you would see one end of it. Angled the other way (a negative figure) and you would see the other end.

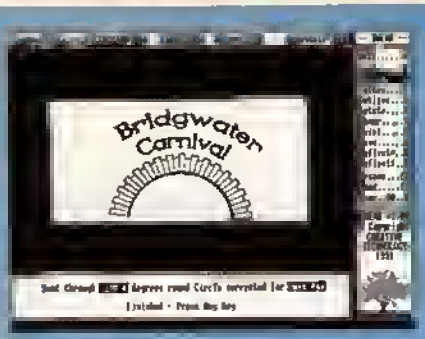
If you choose 0 degrees it will appear as if you are looking at it directly from the side (seeing neither end). 50% will show it at a slight angle and at 100% will appear at quite a distinct angle.

6 However the real work for Tweak actually starts in MicroDesign 2, where you need to have a little foresight in deciding what you need for your modified image.

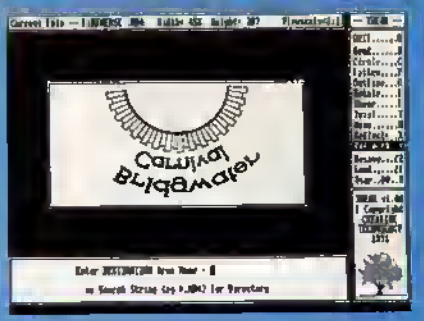
Choose a nice big font in the Layout section ([f3] and select the font name). We chose TABLET26.MDF this time. Move to the Design section [D] and [RETURN]. Write your message boldly across the screen - [W] and place the cursor where you want the text to start.

Then draw the stonework pattern along the bottom on the text. This can be done quite easily using the Rectangle command. Do the first few and then use the Block command to repeat it. Make sure the stonework stretches far wider than the text. Save this as a .MDA file in layout (press [f2]). Adjust the box around the area [RETURN] and chose a file name. Save the wall pattern as a separate .MDA file as it will come in useful later.

7 Creating circles



8 The finished product



9 Using Reflect

7 Exit from MicroDesign 2 and load up Tweak. Load the file [f1] and then type in the file name (eg A:CARNIVAL.MDA). Then choose the Circle utility [C]. As the name would almost suggest, this will twist the image into a circle if required. This time we don't really want it in a complete circle (360 degrees). We want a semi-circle (180 degrees). Note that if you want the semi circle to go like a rainbow you make the degrees a positive figure. If you want it to go like a cup you chose a negative figure.

It then asks if you want it adjusted for an upright or a sideways page. Because of the way that pixels are rectangular rather than square this can make a real difference to a circle (choose the wrong one and you get an oval).

Then select a name for the new file that will remind you that you have an adjusted image here (CIRCCARN.CUT for instance).

8 It is at this point that you take the advice of Creative Technology and go away and read a good book or two.

Circle seems to be the slowest utility on the Tweak disc, and with a reasonably big file this part of the process can take quite a while. It is advisable not to watch it at work.

When you come back you will discover that the whole image has been twisted into a semi-circle. Now you will see why you had to make the bottom line of stonework so long. Being in the bottom part of the picture it is greatly reduced in size.

This is something that has to be taken into account when placing anything that shouldn't be distorted too much. Text in this part of the picture, for instance, could be distorted until it was unreadable.

As the program has automatically saved this image to disc you can go on with the next stage of the process without having to reload.

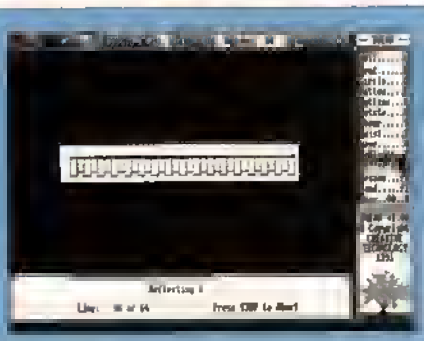
9 At this stage we are trying to get the effect of the bridge reflected in the still water of a river. The simple way of doing this is to choose [Y] for Reflect.

There are two Reflect commands – [Y] for turning the image on the Y axis (for all you mathematical types - and that's upside down for everyone else) or [X] to turn it back to front.

Again you have to choose a file name for it to be saved to. If you were carrying out a number of processes on the same image it would be possible to use the same name all the time.

If you did this, it would simply overwrite the previous version of the file every time you saved it, which would in turn save a considerable amount of that valuable disc space.

Reflect, luckily enough, is actually one of the faster utilities on the disc. It takes literally only a matter of seconds to turn the image upside down.



10 Using Reverse

11 Assembling the image

12 Printing

10 The last task in Tweak is to reverse the image of the stonework that we saved in our first visit to MicroDesign 2. Load this using [f1] and type in the file name.

You will soon notice the considerable difference in time taken between a dealing with a big file and handling a small one. When using Tweak, it is worthwhile cutting the margins round your picture to the barest minimum as even empty lines take time to process.

Tweak does have a utility to Re-save the image. This is an easy way to alter the format of files. You can save it as an .MDA, a .CUT or even a .GRF file. However, it also allows you to re-crop an existing picture.

If you have a large amount of white space around your picture it is well worth while re-cropping it as close in to the actual image as possible.

11 And now [Q]uit from Tweak and load MicroDesign 2 again. As the elements will each be larger than can be viewed on the Design section screen the picture will have to be assembled in the Layout section.

This is slightly trickier than in Design. You don't have the same control over positioning. But it is perfectly possible with a little care.

Before you start loading files click on the third box on the top line of the [EXTRA] box ([EXTRA] and [PASTE]). This will allow the images to overlap without obliterating what is underneath.

Put the reversed stone work at the top, the upright circle image below, the reversed circled image below that and the original stone at the bottom. You may have to trim the edge of the stonework if it is too long. And then simply save the whole thing in another .MDA file.

12 And so to printing out the new picture using the new improved print drivers. These clever little pieces of programming can be used as memory resident RSX-type programs or can be attached to the MicroDesign 2 or ProScan printer drivers.

This will only affect you if you have an external printer (in other words you are not using the dot matrix printer you got with your 8000 series machine).

There is an installation program that will install the driver in the MicroDesign print drivers with the minimum of effort. The advantage of this is that it cuts out a number of possible problems if you use it as a memory resident. However if you want to use the drivers to improve the speed of all your printing (it will speed up any program except LocoScript unfortunately) you have to use it as a memory resident program.

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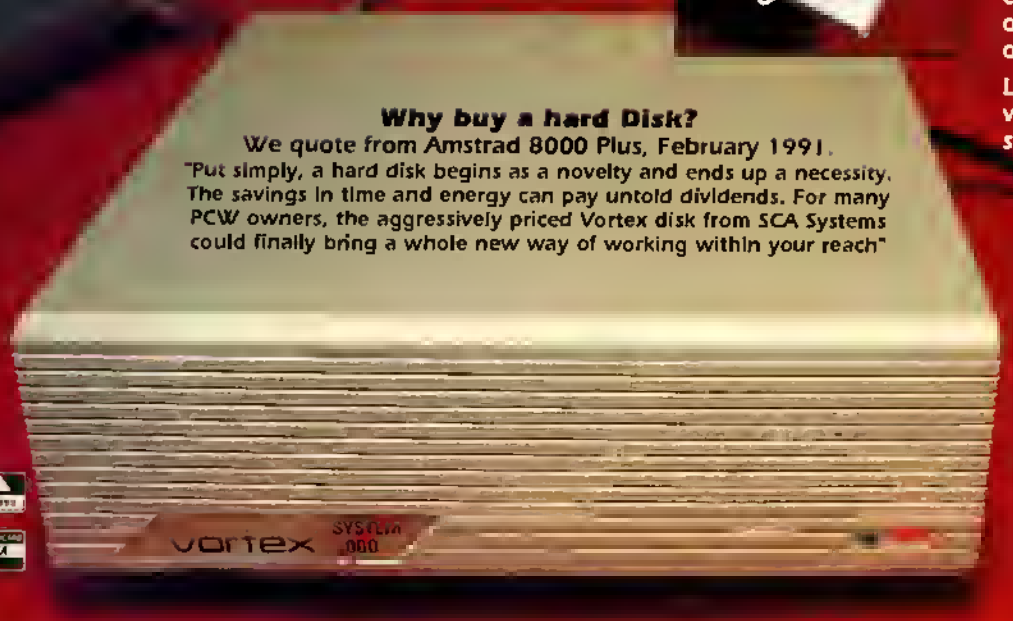

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Treasure Trove

Can't find the word you're looking for? Martin Le Poidevin looks at how to enlist the help of a Thesaurus – on your PCW

The Thesaurus might not be a writing tool that would be at the top of everyone's list of great inventions – but there are those among us who simply cannot start to write without one close at hand.

Put in computer terms, a Thesaurus is a database. Storing information and then looking it up again – perhaps flicking through thousands of unwanted bits of information on the way – and then cross-referencing it with other entries is what computers are best at.

The problem is that this requires a tremendous amount of information, as well as a program to handle that information and produce it to best advantage. Three Inch Software came up with two solutions.

Firstly, instead of using a normal 720k disc, they have cleverly formatted their disc to hold about 800k of information. This means that the database holds entries for 1000 words. But there are drawbacks: you cannot write to an 800k format disc on the PCW, so you cannot update the Thesaurus, and the disc can only be read by a double density drive. 8256 owners cannot use the disc.

The second problem was overcome by using an existing piece of software – the Thesaurus disc is just one, big LocoFile data document. Again, this has both advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, it means that the Thesaurus can be used in the LocoScript environment; on the minus side it means that you have to own LocoScript 2 and LocoFile. It also means that you can't use the Thesaurus with any other word processing program.

No experience needed

Fortunately, you do not need to know anything about LocoFile to be able to operate the Thesaurus. Everything is already set up for use.

You will need to make sure a double density (720k) drive is free. Move any file which is on that drive and which you wish to edit on to another drive – A: or M: are the most likely candidates – insert your Thesaurus disc, and press [f7] to tell LocoScript that you have done so. LocoFile can be called up either from the disc manager or while editing, by hitting [f1] and selecting 'Run LocoFile'. You will need to make sure, following the on-screen instructions, that you load the Thesaurus file (it is called TREASURE.)

The data is a series of pages, each with the same pre-defined structure, each catalogued according to the 'entry' name – the word corresponding to an entry in Roget. Below this on the screen page is a list of synonyms, and at the bottom, a list of phrases, again alternatives and synonyms for the 'entry' word.

The only other information on the page are two numbers. The one in the top left hand corner is the 'page' number (although the computer calls it the Record number) – there are 1115 pages in the Thesaurus. The top right hand corner holds the 'List' number. This is the number attached to the 'entry' word in the computer's catalogue But your first contact with the computer will not be to search for a record number: you will be looking up a word.

When you first arrive in LocoFile, press [f5] (the Goto function), and type in the word you want an alternative for. Press [ENTER], and the computer will find either the entry for that word, if one exists, or the first page on which the word appears as a 'synonym'. If that set of words does not quite match up to your required shade of meaning, you will need to move to the next page which mentions it: quite logically, all you have to do is press the [PAGE] key. If that page is not the right one, then you can either step forwards to the next page (using [PAGE] again) or back to the previous one (using [ALT][PAGE]).

Eventually, moving forwards, you will run out of lists which contain this word: at this point, the computer will appear to choose its own, with (be warned) some rather odd suggestions!

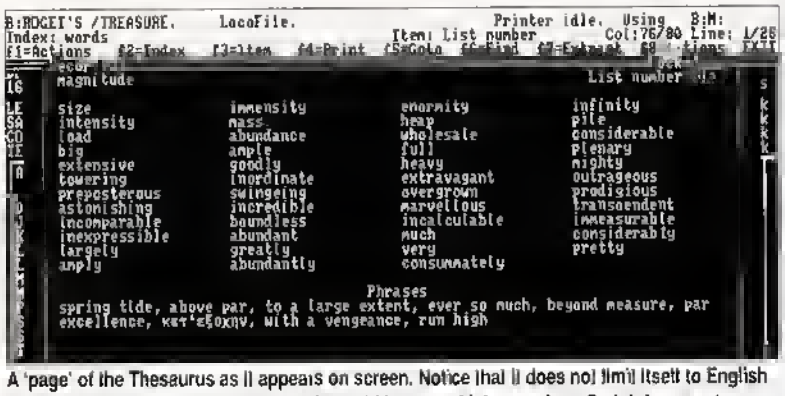
If you were looking at the page numbers (top left) as you moved through the file, you may have noticed that they were far from consecutive. But Roget, you remember, ordered his material so that related topics were near each other. So, there may be occasions on which you have rejected everything that the computer has offered, and you decide to move consecutively through the pages. This is particularly important when you come to those entries which have more than one page – moving from 31a to 31b, for instance. All you have to do here is change the way the computer looks for things. This is easier than it sounds.

Press [f2] (for Index), and when the menu appears move the tick from the 'words' to the 'Record number' line. Do this in the usual LocoScript way, using either the [+] and [-] keys, or using the space bar to toggle. Now press [ENTER], and you will be returned to the main LocoFile screen. Notice that the 'Index' indicator on line two of the status bar at the top of the screen has changed to 'Record number'. Now try pressing the [PAGE] key – and you will see that the page number moves on by one, and a new page appears. If the original List number had an 'a' after it, it will now be a 'b'. Moving back is just a matter of pressing [ALT][PAGE].

One more important facility remains – moving our chosen word into the document we are working on. Again, this easy task uses functions familiar from LocoScript – the [COPY] and [PASTE] functions. Simply position your cursor over the word you wish to transfer; the cursor is moved using the usual arrow keys, with shift to make the move in larger steps. [RELAY] and [ENTER] also make moving around easier.

Once the word you want is highlighted, press [COPY], and using the cursor or [EOL] key, highlight the whole word, and press [COPY] again. Choose a block to store it under, and press the appropriate key. Move back to LocoScript, [PASTE] the word into place, and continue editing.

Perhaps a Thesaurus on disc does not have the elegance and mystique of a printed one – but it could well contribute to making your creative life easier. ●



A 'page' of the Thesaurus as it appears on screen. Notice that it does not limit itself to English words and phrases! Any of these words could be pasted into your LocoScript document.

Hints & Tips

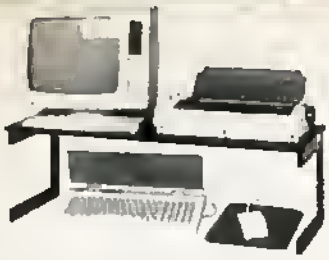
● If you are looking for a particular word, it is best to give the computer the shortest possible form of the word, and omit any endings. For instance, if you want to replace 'usefulness' you should look up 'use', and so on.

Competition!

Three Inch Software's Thesaurus costs £19.95 (including VAT) and is distributed by Cumbria-based WAVE. They can be found at 1 Buccleuch Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 1SR, telephone (0229) 870000. However, we've got ten – yes, ten, of the programs to give away to readers! All you have to do tell us in which century Dr Roget invented the thesaurus. Was it:

a) 17th century
b) 18th century, or
c) 19th century?

Send your answer in on a postcard, to 8000 Plus, Thesaurus Competition, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP. Entries must arrive by 25th July. The first ten correct answers to be drawn from the hat will win!



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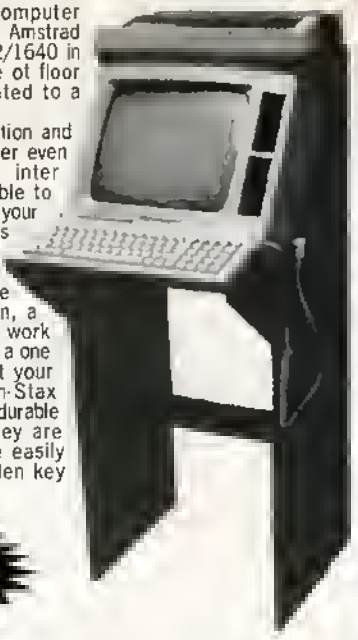

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Inner Secrets

Silicon City's new 3.5" drive will feel perfectly at home inside your PCW8256. But how comfortable will you feel about fitting it? We allay your fears in this month's step by step guide to drive installation

Standards count for a lot these days. Indeed, the word itself has a ring to it. It seems to demand attention, to assert its authority, to make one sit up and take notice. It is also a word that could bring about a lot of changes, pouring oil on to the troubled waters of the computer world.

Standards, or rather the lack of them, go back a long way in the history of the computer. Their existence is a problem that simply refuses to go away, returning again and again to challenge the computer boffins. The question is, of course, why should this be?

A simple way of explaining it would be to say that no two people need the same things from a computer. So, the industry has to furnish a myriad of incarnations, from the big-bucks mainframe to the pocket memory jogger; from the PC to the PCW.

But it is just as true to say that no man is an island. To find that your information can travel no further than the boundaries of your own brand of machine is often downright annoying.

Awkward questions like, "why can't I continue to write the thesis I started on a PC on my PCW?" are heard far and wide. And as the voice for change becomes louder, the industry is forced to respond. The quest for standards has already begun.

One way of getting a steady flow of information between two machines is to give them the same type of disc drive. Go into any computer shop and you will

find that the hot favourite of the moment is the 3.5" drive. Whispers in high places would have us believe that one day our very own PCW will jump on the bandwagon and come complete with this type of drive. This is where the theories start to expound.

Follow this train of thought to its natural conclusion and, if the 3.5" disc is already in the lead, then it may well end up holding sway over all the other sizes. Like the sailor with a girl in every port, people with the most popular drive will be able to skip from machine to machine with utter abandon.

Now could be the time to ensure that you have a stake in what looks set to become an industry standard. Silicon City have given us a gentle push in the right direction with their new drive made especially for your PCW.

But hang on a minute, you may say. There is nothing new about fitting a 3.5" drive to the PCW. The drive can bridge the gap between PC and PCW, and here at 8000 Plus we have always said exactly that. But there again, this is not a run of the mill product.

The new drive brings a breath of fresh air to the PCW scene. Let us first say that there are no bells or whistles or fancy gimmicks. Its appeal is based on entirely different criteria.

Instead of sitting next to your PCW on the desk, forever thought of as just another add-on, this drive is fitted inside the machine. Gone is that unsightly box. Gone also is the need to fiddle around with an extra power switch.

Both PCW and drive will work as a single unit: so much so, that it is very easy to forget that your new drive is not a native component of your machine. It merges into its setting to become a part of the PCW – a part that you will use without a second thought.

Last month we showed you how to fit one such drive to the 9512. This month we turn our screwdrivers to the 8256 and we can honestly say, it is far easier than you think.

To open up your machine and put in a new drive may sound either incredibly brave – or incredibly foolhardy. But when you have finished it looks great – and your friends and family are sure to be impressed by your DIY ability if nothing else.

Only you will know just how easy it was. So, why not roll up your sleeves and follow this month's step-by-step guide to internal drive installation?

HOW TO USE THE NEW DRIVE

So, your new drive is sitting inside your machine. Now you actually want to use it, rather than just gaze at it admiringly, so what should you do?

Most people will have a host of questions at this stage . How do you format the larger disc? Will the files on the 3.5" disc still appear on the Disc Management Screen in LocoScript? In short, can you treat your new acquisition just like any other PCW drive?

To begin at the beginning, we are going to format a disc. This means booting up CP/M and typing *diskit* at the a> prompt. A menu appears, from which you need to choose the option to format a disc, followed by the option to choose the B drive. Don't take your eyes away from the PCW for too long or you will miss a truly magical moment. Lo and behold, as the disc is formatted, the little orange light comes on beside the drive mouth, proving beyond doubt that your installation has been successful.

THE FIRST STEPS

Once formatted, you can treat your new B drive disc like any other. To change drives within CP/M type in B: and press [RETURN]. The CP/M prompt changes to B> to remind you that this is the current drive. If you ask to save or load a file the B drive is the one that CP/M will automatically turn to.

In comparison to CP/M, using a second drive in LocoScript is even easier. The B: drive has its own section on the Disc Management Screen (just like the M drive) and you can select the second drive by moving the highlighted bar across with the cursor.

BRIDGING THE GAP

But how do you get files from the PCW to the PC using your new drive? Although you now have the chance to save your files on a disc of the correct size, believe it or not, they are still in the wrong format for the PC.

The answer is to this problem is to format your 3.5" disc in the standard PC-style by using a program such as Moonstone's 2 in 1 (see margin). You can then use the program to copy files from your PCW's A drive disc to the PC-style B drive disc. And then, finally, the information can be read by a PC.

Fact File

- The 3.5" internal drive for the 8256 costs £91.90 plus VAT from Sllicon City at Dept 8, Postal Buildings, Ash Street, Windermere, Cumbria, LA23 3EB, (09662) 88707
- In addition to the materials already provided, you will need to supply a Stanley knife, a crosshead and flat-bladed screwdriver, and finally, a duster.
- Transfer between the PCW and PC requires an additional program, such as Moonstone's 2 in 1. The program costs £29.95 (including VAT) and is available from Moonstone Computing, Unit 14, Strathclyde Business Centre, Clyde Street, Clydebank, G81 1PF, (041) 9413120. However, if you buy 2 in 1 from Sllicon City at the same time as you purchase the drive, the price will be reduced to £25.95.
- There are several differences between the 3.5" disc and the 3" disc. Firstly, a 3.5" disc has 720k: much more than the 180k of the 3" A drive disc. It is also far more widely available, and, as a result, cheaper. We compared Dixon's prices: £14.95 for five 3" discs or £19.95 for ten 3.5" discs.
- This month's walkthrough was compiled with the help of Silicon City, and it has been tried and tested. However, if you are at all unsure about tackling DIY PCW operations, leave it in the hands of the professionals. Check the directory on page 48 for details of the nation's PCW repairers.

Hints & Tips

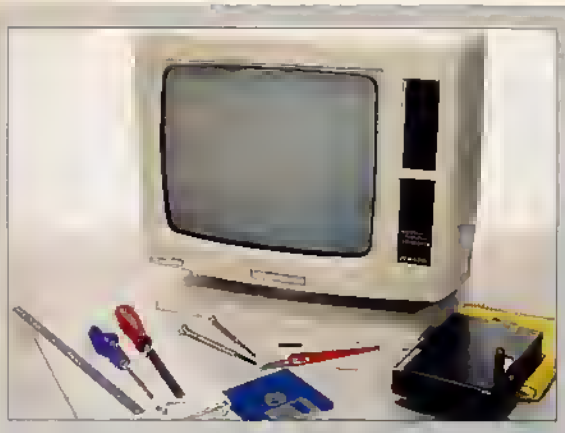
● Step 1
Not all of the files sent out by Silicon City are ready-assembled, You may have to put yours together. If this is the case, you will be supplied with a handle, a plastic tube and the file blade. Simply insert the tube into the handle of the file. The blade then fits snugly inside the tube.

● Step 2
Your PCW may not look exactly like ours because we have a German interface at the back of our machine. This is enclosed in the metal casing that you can see in the centre of the photograph. Although it makes the PCW look different it does not effect any part of the installation.

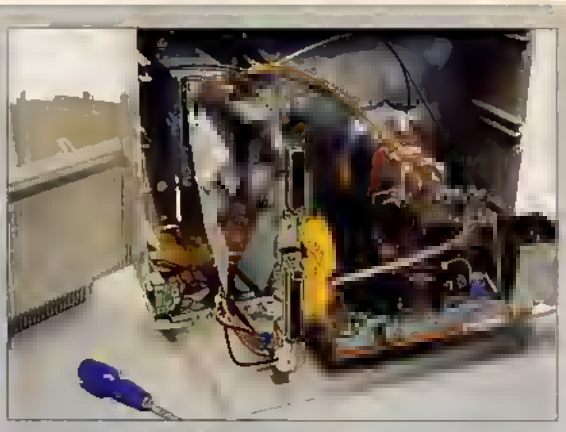
● Step 3
Take care not to insert the hacksaw blade too far into the perimeter gap.

● Step 4
For the best results hold the file with the smooth side towards the left when removing the left hand part of the plastic. Turn it towards the right when removing the other half. This ensures that the edges of the hole will not be ragged.

● Step 5
When the drive is in place there is a section of circuitry in the bottom corner that is comes very close to the new drive. Don't worry about this since there is no electric current in this part of the PCW. However, do check that no bare wires are touching the casing of the disc drive.



1 First make sure you have a clear, uncluttered work space with enough room to lay the PCW face down on the bench. Check you have everything you need. The following items are provided for you: the drive itself, a hacksaw blade, a small black and white piece of paper (the template), three identical screws, a section of beige sticky-back plastic and a file. You'll need the extras listed in the Fact File on the previous page, plus a soft cloth to lay the computer down on.

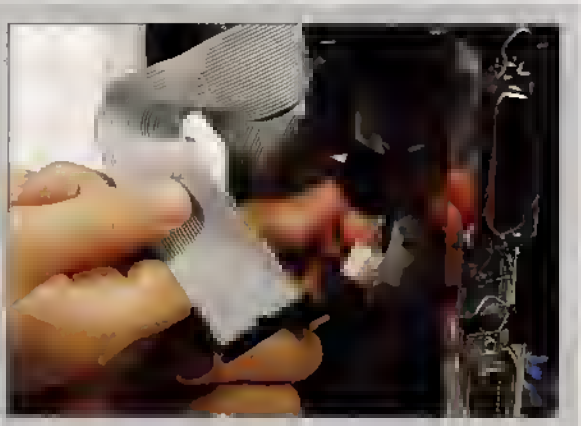


2 Unplug your keyboard, your printer, and any other add-ons and put them out of the way. To discharge the electricity in your PCW switch off your machine and leave the plug in the socket for one minute. Only then should you unplug the PCW. Peel off the PCW logo to reveal the plastic plate underneath. Turn your machine around, remove the six screws that secure the casing (they are marked with arrows) and take off the cover. Place the duster inside as shown.

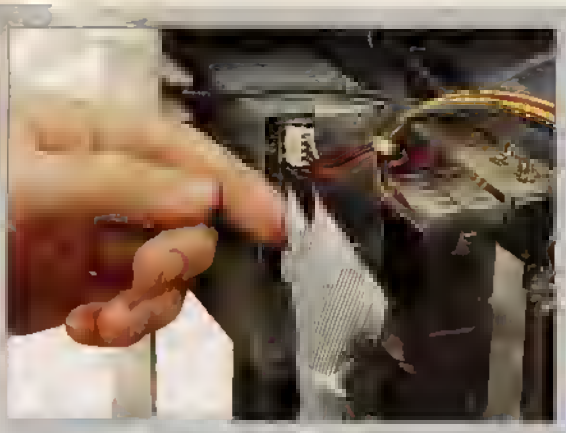
3 Next you will need to remove the piece of plastic which was covered by the PCW logo – and now covers the slot for the second drive. It is held in place by six tabs situated at the top, the middle and the bottom of the slot. To break these, take your hacksaw and insert half an inch into the gap as shown in our photograph. Run it across until you come to one of the tabs, then use the blade to cut through it. Repeat this process for each tab. Remove and discard the plastic plate.

4 The slot is not yet wide enough for the 3.5" drive. This means that some of the casing has to be removed. Find the black and white template. Peel the back off and stick it down so that the black right hand edge of the template is aligned with the right hand edge of the slot, as shown in the photograph. Use the file provided to whittle away the black section of the template, thus creating a hole that is the same size as the new drive. Take care not to cut too far downwards.

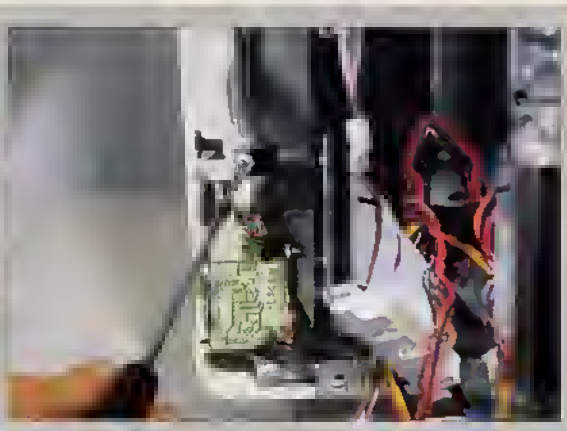
5 Peel off the template. The remains of the plastic tabs are trimmed using the Stanley knife. This should leave you with a smooth edge. Now it is time to check that the drive fits correctly. Try it for size in the hole as shown. It will protrude slightly at the front. At this stage you should also check that the tabs attached to the drive itself are sticking out at right angles. Remove the duster from inside the machine, and gently brush away any dust that remains.



6 Your new drive will be attached to two cables found at the back of your A drive. One is a flat ribbon cable and the other is a four wire cable as shown in the picture. Snip the tab which binds them together with a Stanley knife. Next, look at the space left for the drive. You should see three mounting pillars inside, one at the top, one to the left and one to the right. These will support your new drive and you should prepare each one by inserting a screw and tightening it.

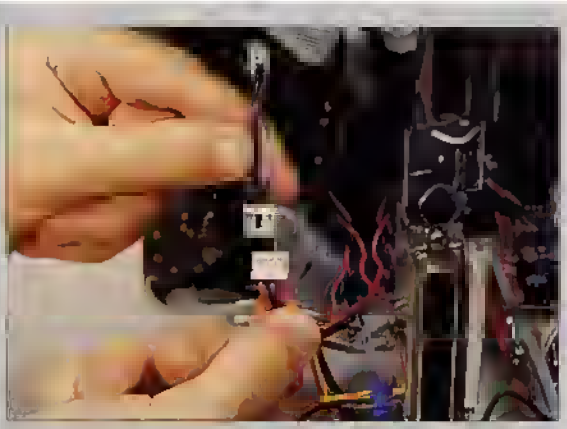


7 Before you go any further you must make sure that you have a 'standard' machine. To find out, look at your top drive (the original A drive). It should look like the one shown in our photograph. In other words, the coloured edge of the ribbon cable should be next to the four way power connector. If this is not the case, then there is no need to panic. Take a look at our margin note (Step 7a) for the remedial action which you will need to take.



8 This step is rather tricky, so do not try to hurry it. First, hold your drive sideways on so that there are tabs on the top, left hand and right hand side of the drive. When you insert the drive into the space these tabs should line up with the pillars. Push the drive forward into place. Insert the right hand screw and half tighten it. Do the same with the left hand and then topmost screw. Once they are all in place, tighten each screw as far as it will go, finishing with the left hand screw.

9 The ribbon cable from the A drive is plugged into the adaptor at the back of the new drive. The coloured strip of the adaptor should be in line with the coloured strip of the cable, as you can see from our photograph. Or, if step 7 revealed that you do not have a standard PCW, connect this cable the other way round (as explained in the margin note, Step 7a). The pins should slide fairly smoothly into place but take care not to bend them.



10 Next you need to connect the power supply. It is a four wire cable. When it is plugged into the adaptor it is converted into a three way cable as you can see from the photograph. Attach the cable to the adaptor as shown. This is the final connection to your B drive. Position both cables out of the way before you start to reassemble the PCW. The disc is fully operational at this stage but there are still a few final cosmetic touches before the drive is ready for use.

11 Replace the back cover. The expansion sockets should not be forced in any way, so make sure that the casing is positioned accurately before you slot it home. The most likely obstruction is the mains cable on the side of the PCW, so check that this not in the way. Replace the screws, using the arrows on the casing as a guideline. To make it easier, turn the PCW face down on the blanket or use some blu-tack to fix the screw to the end of the screwdriver.

12 If you want to clean the front of your PCW then you can do so with a small piece of cloth, dampened with methylated spirits. To hide the gap on the left hand side there is a special plastic frame. Position this carefully, with the wide part of the frame to the left. Peel off the back and stick it down so that the final drive looks neat and professional, like the one shown in above. You are now the proud owner of a 3.5" internal drive which is all ready for use!

Drive Installation Hints & Tips

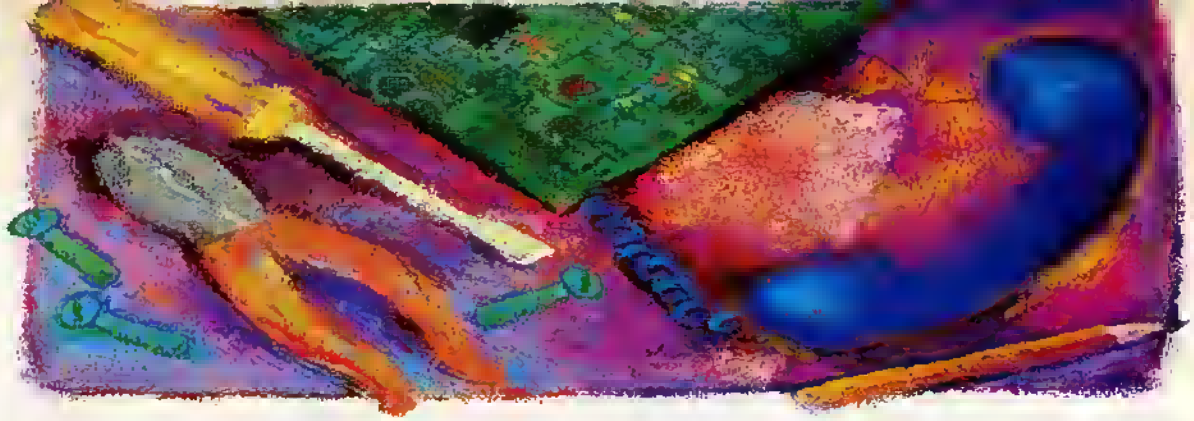
● Step 7a
Sometimes the cable will be attached the other way round. If that is the case then the same will apply to your new B drive. To make the connection the 'wrong' way round you will need to file away the small nodule that protrudes from the side of the plastic connector.

● Step 7b
One common cause of a drive behaving temperamentally is a lack of contact between pins and sockets. Take this opportunity to prevent it cropping up in the future by plugging and unplugging the ribbon cable a few times. This will clean off any potentially troublesome debris.

● Step 8
You may find it easier to position and tighten the screws if you lay your PCW flat on the bench, not forgetting the cloth to protect the screen.

● Step 9
Some PCW models have two plastic nodules protruding from the cable connection. If these prevent you from plugging in the ribbon cable, then you can remove them using the file.

● Step 12
The 8256 comes in two shades, medium grey and light grey. It follows that the masking tape should also come in two colours, as indeed it does. If you find that your mask does not match your PCW then contact Silicon City and they will replace it. The PCW shown in our picture was sealed using a light grey mask.



the Good Repairs Guide

This month we are opening up a new section – the Good Repairs Guide. Like our Good Software Guide and Good Club and Training Guide, we will maintain this, updating it and printing it every month so that in the event of your computer giving you trouble, you will know exactly where to turn to for help.

We have tried to indicate the range of services offered by each company, together with a rough idea of how long they will take to carry out a repair; whether they will do on-site repairs (in which they send an engineer to your computer) bench repairs (where you send the computer to them) or both; whether they will charge for carriage if appropriate; what sort of warranty, cover or other such policy they can provide; whether they are prepared to quote over the phone, and so on.

Of course, many of the details given depend on circumstances. Repair times are very much dependent on the availability of spares (every company we spoke to made this point) and your location, courier charges are naturally affected by where the computer is being carried from and to, and most were loath to give exact repair quotes over the 'phone. Where appropriate, however, most were prepared to discuss the possible price without making a commitment.

Finally, all our Guides are compiled with your help. If we have missed out a repairer, or if any of the details of those we have included are wrong, please don't hesitate to let us know.

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9 Paddock Mount, Dawley,
Telford, Shropshire
TF4 3PR
0952 502737

- *All PCWs, PCW printers*
- *Average time: 5 days*
- *No on-site repairs*
- *3 month warranty on repairs*
- *Carriage charge repairs on distance*

DICTAPHONE CO LTD
Regent Square
The Parade
Leamington Spa
CV32 4NE
0926 429124

- *All PCWs, PCW printers*
- *Average time: 2 days*
- *All repairs on-site – countrywide service but one control centre.*
- *Contract maintenance: £39 to £54 for computers less than a year old, £53 to £73 for older computers (current prices) fixed, dependent on model but regardless of location.*
- *Prices and contracts discussed over the 'phone*

CMC COMPUTERS
The Green, Cavendish,
Suffolk
CO10 8BB
0787 280526

- *All PCWs, PCW printers*
- *Average time: 7 to 10 days*
- *On-site maintenance and service contracts available; also warranty on repairs*
- *Carriage charged where applicable*
- *Estimates given over 'phone*

MICROTYNE
No 1/3 Gallow Gate,
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 4SG
091 261 4088

- *All PCWs, PCW printers*
- *Average time: 3-4 days*
- *Carriage charged on long distances*
- *On-site service soon to be implemented*
- *3 month warranty on repairs*
- *Quotes not usually given over the 'phone*

PC MICROCENTRE
9 Cherington Road
Hanwell
London
081 840 5343

- *All PCWs, PCW printers*
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- *Warranty available*
- *Will quote 'worst case scenario' – final price often much lower*
- *Fixed labour charge*

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Preston
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0995 606060

- *All PCWs, PCW printers*
- *No on-site repairs*
- *Time taken: from 24 hrs*
- *Carriage charge: £10 quoted*
- *Will quote over 'phone*
- *3 month warranty on repairs*

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Kilve, Bridgwater
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0278 74528

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- *No on-site repairs*
- *Carriage charge inclusive*
- *Will discuss cost over 'phone*
- *3 month warranty on repairs*

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081 902 5218

- *All PCWs, PCW printers*
- *24-48 hour turnaround*
- *No on-site repairs*
- *courier charge for longer distances*
- *3 month warranty available*
- *Will offer rough quote over 'phone*

AMAC COMPUTER SYSTEMS
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Barwell, Weston Super Mare
BS24 6HD
0934 820669

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- *2 days and over*
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- *Warranty repairs 3 to 6 months*
- *Maximum possible price given as quote*

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Bath
0225 448855

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- *2-3 day turnaround*
- *No on-site repairs*
- *Courier charge*
- *Quotes discussed over 'phone*

AVCOM ELECTRONICS
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0548 856279

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- *7 day turnaround*
- *On-site within Kingsbridge area*
- *No carriage charge for local repairs*

NKC GROUP (REPAIRS)
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Kent
0634 387185

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- *Quotes over 'phone*

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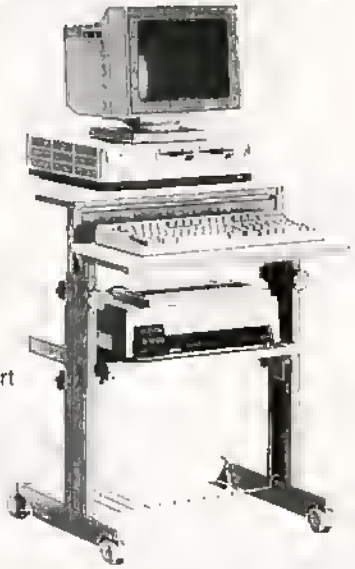

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Staying Power

The PCW has confounded those critics who said it would never last. Andy Wilton discovers the reasons for its tenacity

Whenever PCW industry folk get together, one topic of conversation always comes up, namely: how much longer do you think it's going to last? The "it" in question is not the recession, the uniform business rate or any other normal trading worry: "it" means "the PCW market, our livelihoods and all that stuff".

The fact is, people who make their living from PCW software or add-on hardware feel like they're living on borrowed time – that one day soon the world's PCW users will throw their machines away en masse, buy other machines instead, and that will be that.

A partial explanation is easily furnished. You see, it's a general principle of the computer industry that all makes of computer will fall by the wayside eventually, to be replaced by something newer and shinier.

However, with the continuing success of Amstrad's sales effort and the steady trickle of new hardware and software developments, this particular general principle seems not to apply to the PCW. If anything, business seems to be getting brisker. So why the pessimism? A spot of history may be enlightening.

Unsuccessful operation

Nice hardware, shame about the OS. Once upon a time, software for the PCW meant CP/M programs written in the USA sometime during Jimmy Carter's term of office. Typically these programs needed a fair bit of fiddling to make them run properly. When you did get one of them going it would turn out to have a 24x80 character display tucked into the corner of the PCW's 32x90 screen. It would make mediocre use of your machine's bundled printer, and getting it to recognise those special PCW keys like [CAN] or [EOL] required a thorough knowledge of the ultra-hostile SETKEYS utility. And no matter what you did, it would never ever produce a pound sign on screen.

In short, the software industry's support for the PCW in those days amounted to (a) copying CP/M programs on to 3" discs and (b) knocking out a photocopied sheet of installation instructions. You couldn't really blame people for taking this approach. Like any other business, software publishing is intended first and foremost as a profit-making venture. If you invest a huge amount of programming time in software for a dead-end machine, you won't make much of a profit. And that's precisely how people thought of the PCW when it was launched – as a dead-end machine, a lump of obsolete technology that would only sell because of its very low price.

Defence mechanisms

Amstrad themselves didn't work overtime fighting this attitude. They sold PCWs purely as word-processors, and seemed genuinely surprised when people started writing software for them. "Why would anyone want to program a typewriter?", an Amstrad technical support person once asked me.

As it turned out, both the industry pundits and Amstrad rather missed the point. The PCW was – and is – a solid, practical computer, easily powerful enough for most people's needs but at the same time well within most people's budgets. It sold well, and attracted lots of software and hardware support.

Here was a computer doing what successful computers have always done: selling well and attracting plenty of third-party support. Somehow though, despite shedding the "typewriter" tag in pretty short order, the PCW never quite lost its "old technology" label, and the short life expectancy that this implied.

That old technology chestnut. It's fair enough, I suppose: the PCW does use old technology – but then, it isn't the only aged piece of hardware around. Age is irrelevant so long as the machines in question does a good job. Many of the popular machines have survived and been upgraded simply because people liked the software available for them. This is true for the PCW. The Micro Designs and Masterfiles of this world can still command huge followings – and rightly so. You might be able to find more sophisticated packages on other machines, but you'd pay five or ten times the price and get a drastically more complex, unwieldy piece of software.

Computer industry pundits wrote the PCW off the moment Amstrad unveiled it. Over the half-dozen years since then, the machine's life expectancy has steadily risen to the point where it could keep going indefinitely. If Amstrad don't feel like upgrading the PCW's hardware, the likes of SCA and Cirtech seem happy to fill the gap. Suddenly you can double your machine's speed, quadruple its memory or increase its disc capacity fifty-fold, and all on (in computer terms) a shoestring. Why shouldn't a cheap, easy-to-use computer with lots of cheap, easy-to-use software carve a permanent niche for itself? The only really worrying thing seems to be worry itself. If enough third-party suppliers deserted the PCW, fearing a mass exodus of customers, then they might just bring that exodus about: such computer prophecies have a way of being self-fulfilling.

The PCW is pretty secure against this kind of thing, however: a narrowing software market won't immediately hit sales of PCWs, because so many people buy it as a word processor and discover its other uses later. This puts a brake on the vicious circle of falling support and falling sales.

Software Imperative's Andy Wilton: "Predicting the future is a good way to make a fool of yourself in this business..."

Otherwise there's only the "suicide scenario" – the possibility that Amstrad will stop making PCWs even though the things are still selling. This would entail Alan Sugar turning his back on a nice little earner though, and he's always been glacially slow to do that kind of thing in the past. Predicting the future is a good way to make a fool of yourself in this business, but I'd rate Amstrad dropping a profitable product as rather less likely than Apple putting a free Mac in every packet of Rice Krispies. ●

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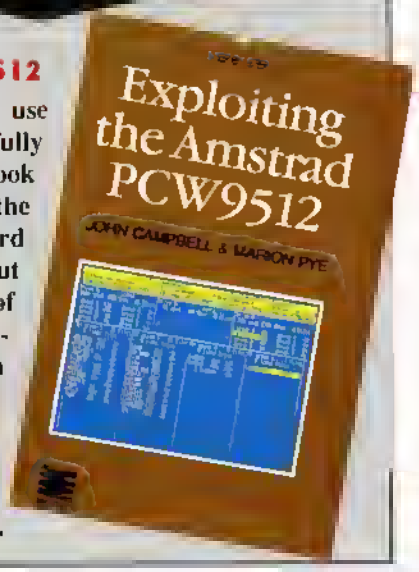

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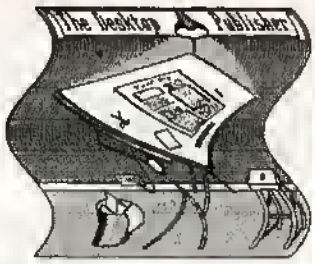

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Last Words?

David Langford ruminates on matters recessionary – and how they affect the plight of the freelance writer

Whether or not there's a genuine recession in the world of publishing, the industry seems to have talked itself into one. From my safe bunker I keep hearing the screams of editors toppling from fifth-storey windows with one last rejection slip still clutched pathetically in their hands.

I promise that I tried *very hard indeed* not to giggle when this happened to the chap who last year returned a submission with mild apologies for having sat on it for five agonised, suspenseful years....

Other editors are pale and sweaty after being summoned to the offices of Higher Management, shown the vertiginous drop from the window-ledge, and told, "One day, son, all this could be yours." Then they are released with a caution and instructions to spend less. Except for a guaranteed international best-seller, in which case they can offer as many millions as they see fit. It's difficult just now to be an editor without spending hours gibbering and biting one's toenails.

These symptoms are caused by such decisions as: do you lash out £2,000,000 trying to poach a horror megastar author who always does well? It's relatively easy for editors to sell this idea to the holders of the purse-strings: they can point to a proven track record of best-sellers. Unfortunately eight other publishing houses are planning exactly the same. By the time the shark-like bidding frenzy is over, the deal is made, and the book is launched with the major publicity campaign demanded by such an investment, it's possible that the result will be that common phenomenon of the 1980s — the best-seller *which loses money*.

This happens because today's surreal figures in the genre of Fat Books With Embossed Foil Jackets are such that, quite often, there is no reasonable possibility of making enough profit from the book to cover the initial advance to that megastar author. The publishers are in theory aiming for a long-term investment: goodwill or contractual ties which will keep the author with them, and hopes that this publicity splurge will cast a glow of increased desirability over his or her later books (plus earlier ones which they will try to buy in economically and reprint).

Of course, the moment the megastar is off that contractual hook, the frantic auction could start again, with a different publisher winning the right to pay X million pounds ... and bye-bye to the first one's "far-sighted" investment.

Starting out

The notion of long-term goodwill used to apply to first-time authors. Although there are exceptions, a first book tends not to do very well. Editors used to regard it as an investment, with hopes of winning the loyalty of promising authors. A modest advance would be paid, a modest print-run scheduled: three or four books hence, this could be an established writer. And the investment was a small sum which unlike those speculative seven-figure advances couldn't possibly threaten the whole publishing house.

This is the paradox. Some editors try to woo promising authors exactly as I've described, but find it harder and harder to "sell" their decisions to an editorial board which keeps screaming, "We've *got* to have another best-seller!"

Trivial pursuit

It's notorious that committee debate issues in inverse proportion to the sums involved. A multi-million-pound expense tends to be nodded through, while an order for paperclips will split the meeting in bitter controversy about expense, waste, possible alternatives, and the villainy of staff who don't appreciate that these luxuries cost £1.20 per thousand.

Just so, our editor finds it incredibly hard to make the case that Fred Obscure is worth a modest investment. There is a hiss of indrawn breath around the boardroom table. Think how many *paperclips* you could buy for £3000. "What's his track record?" snaps a thin-lipped editorial director. First novelists do not tend to have a track record.

(Exceptions are made for media personalities, ex-models, famous terrorists, and so on. They may not be able to write, but get their *X* on the contract and the copy-editors will sort it out. An editor once boasted to me that he'd ghosted a major bestseller in four days, based on fragments of the "unpublishable" script from a famous name I'm not at liberty to divulge.)

The paper curtain

As if the above picture weren't depressing enough, there's a growing possibility that submissions from new authors might never get read at all. With the latest waves of staff cuts, editors have less and less time to scan everything that comes in.

Traditionally, the first sifting of the slushpile is performed by outside help — by freelance publishers' readers, a particularly overworked and ill-paid breed (described here in issue 15, December 1987). They're now having a thin time of it, many being effectively laid off. Some major paperback imprints are no longer employing readers at all ("what, pay *freelances* in a recession?"), while the depleted ranks of editors still lack time to do the work. Never before in the history of literature have so many works been rejected unread by so few.

(Personal note: your columnist was recently privileged to read the entire popular-science slushpile of a noted publisher, a terrifying stack of cobwebbed manuscripts that had been accumulating for six months. "You have one afternoon to report on the lot," they said. Half a day's pay was all the budget would allow. I staggered wearily home.

So, what hope remains for all the aspiring novelists tapping away at PCWs in a corner of the bedroom? There are two encouraging points to bear in mind. One is that there's something artificial about the current panic. World upheavals may send dread ripples down from the vast conglomerates who directly or indirectly own many British publishers ... but the general public hasn't stopped buying books, you know.

In six or twelve months' time there could be an equally wild swing to optimism and a boom might even be declared. In which case some publishers will look a bit silly, like shipowners who jettisoned half their valuable cargo at a premature storm warning. If so, they'll be keen to build up their lists again. This means you.

The other point is that most really good stuff *is* sooner or later pushed through the horrors of the system by an editor who believes in it.

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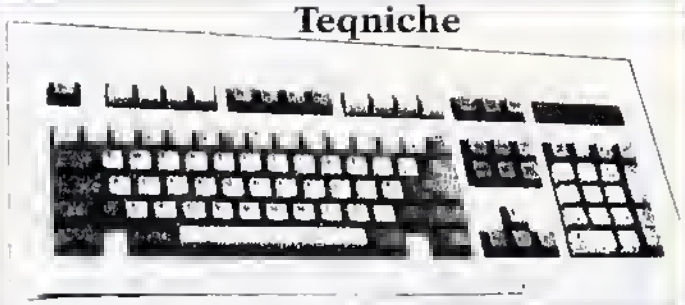

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WM NOV'02

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Playing for Time

What is the point in using a couple of hundred pounds worth of computer in order just to enjoy yourself with games software? Surely the question answers itself. Tim Smith finds out

Relaxing is something of which many of us say "I never get time for that, I'm too busy". But that's really not true.

You can use your PCW to help you relax - *and* you can actually have some control over what you are doing. Much of the games software available for the machine involves you in the action.

After all, why is it just work which brings out the hidden skills and talents in you? 'Play' is an equally important part of life. Different skills can come from this. We all accept this fact.

But computer games and PCW users have never really seen eye to eye. Why should this be?

One argument is that you bought your machine as a tool for doing a job. It is a word processor, or spreadsheet, or desktop publisher - it is not a playground, and frankly after a few hours at the keyboard, the last thing you want to do is to spend a few more in fantasy. A valid argument to be sure. But aren't you missing out on a few benefits from your investment here? What are the other alternatives? The television? The TV does not involve you. When was the last time you gathered a few people around the TV and said: "If we send Inspector Morse over to that pub he might find a clue"?

Never. With your PCW and games like The Pawn (an adventure game classic still available second hand) or Scapeghost, *you* are the hero; you make the decisions. Okay, so TV is less involving than your PCW. But you like to gather a few friends around and play cards. But why did you play that last hand of poker, or Bridge, or pontoon so badly? Could you have done it better? Why not use your PCW to practice? The same applies to chess - a game at which the PCW excels.

Finally, you have probably heard that the PCW ".. is not really very good at games actually". Rubbish. It might not be as good as some of the super fast machines on the market - but these do not come with their own monitors or printers. For the machine it is, the PCW is perfectly adequate for a few hours of fun. Games like Batman and Head Over Heels prove this. They are both extensive in area, and in addition, quite superbly programmed.

Frankly, a few of the myths of computer games to be exploded. A good computer game, like a good book, can be picked up and put down when you want. Unlike a book, more than one person can be involved. Unlike board games, you have a powerful processor creating characters to play with. Unlike the television, you are in control. Don't waste the opportunity to get more from your machine just because of hearsay.

This month's Beginners' Guide looks at three of the games available for the PCW. Each of the games is slightly different in genre- check our summaries for others available in that group.

JARGON BUSTER

When you read about computer games, a great many stock phrases crop up. These are not just for ten year old whizz-kids who are addicted to games playing. Why shouldn't you know them too? Well now you can with the definitive 8000 Plus Guide to computer game terminology.

SHOOT-'EM-UP

The classic form of computer game. It started with Space Invaders back in the early 1980s. The game caused a sensation when it hit this country. In fact Space Invaders is a 'vertical shoot-'em-up', as opposed to a 'horizontal' version such as Defender. All this means is that with the former, play occurs up and down the screen, while the latter occurs from left to right (and sometimes right to left). The aim is simple. Shoot everything in sight from your space ship/submarine/aircraft, and clock up a high score. A positive angle to this type of computer play is that it improves hand to eye co-ordination.

Also in this class come Beat-'em-ups,and Chop-'em-ups (such as Kung Fu and Karate). These deal with human characters rather than flying saucers.

ADVENTURE/ROLE PLAY/INTERACTIVE

Remember when you read that novel or watched that film, and you wanted to be George Smiley, or John Wayne? Well, adventure of role playing games offer you the chance to be the main character in a story which could feature hundreds of other bit-part players. You get to talk, walk, even order about the other folk - of course some times you have to hit or be hit, but then it's only a game.

Lancelot is an excellent example of this genre, as are Knight Orc, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, and Jinxter. These games involve far more brain power than Shoot-'em-ups. You have to play the part of the hero (or in the case of Ingrid's Back, the heroine), solve logic problems, make friends, fight enemies and generally achieve a goal. These goals can be escape (The Leather Goddesses of Phobos), mystery solving (Hitchhiker, Jinxter), exploration (Myth), or generally having a good time (Leisure Suit Larry). Whatever it is, it means that you have to communicate your needs to the computer by typing in sentences. These renge from simple "GO WEST" to more complex "GO WEST, PICK UP THE CHALICE. ASK THE OLD WOMAN FOR THE TIME. HIT GROBBLEGOOK. RUN AWAY" depending on the quality of the game's 'parser'. A parser is the element of the game with translates your human words into computer language. If you enjoy solving problems, acting, or reading detective novels, then this type of game offers a great deal of pleasure.

SIMULATIONS

This area of computer games has caused as much debate as the so-called addictive value of beat-'em-ups. Why? Because many people cannot work out why you should want to simulate playing chess or football, to take two examples, when you could probably do it for real, and without buying a computer in the first place. The simple answer to this is, have you ever tried to play chess or football on your own? Playing Bridge or Backgammon as a single game is no fun. Computers offer the chance to brush up your skills in your own time. in the case of Chess and Bridge this means learning new openings (some computer games store thousands of chess openings), or learn new gambits. in the case of the field sports (World of Soccer is a football simulator worth looking out for) many people are not in a position to play football. They may love the game but be injured or not quite skilled enough to be invited to play in a team - but that doesn't mean that they shouldn't enjoy it! A good simulation will help you with the real thing.

These are by no means all of the types of game available on computer. But they are the three main types from which all others take their roots. One constant fector runs through them all however: you are in control. You can stop and start when you want, you can save your position in a game and come back to it when you need to. In the case of simulations, you can go back over where you went wrong in order to discover how to strengthen your weaknesses. With adventure games, you can lose yourself for a few hours - get away from the big problems and relax.

COLOSSUS BRIDGE 4.0

£17.99 ● CDS Software ● 0302 321134 ● All PCWs

Colossus Bridge is a software package which has much to offer to those who know their bids from their finesses, and to those who wouldn't know a penalty double if it reared up and bit them in the thigh. This type of game is really where the PCW comes into its own.

Not only can you brush up on your skills, you can also learn a great deal about the game from the accompanying manual and free 125 page book 'Begin Bridge' by GCH Fox.

Colossus Bridge allows your PCW to generate random hands, hands with specific point scores or hands which distribute point through the rubber.

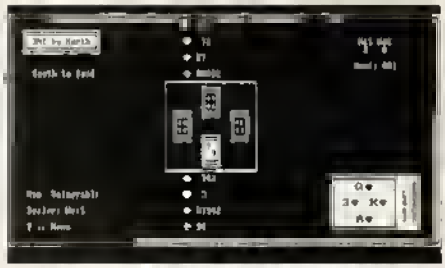
You can seve games for later analysis. You can even watch the PCW play itself, in order to pick up some useful tips. For the beginner to Bridge there is the priceless facility to take back plays in order to do it right the second time... or third or fourth - Bridge is more complicated than it might first appear.

You are not left alone with machine and book either. There is help at hand from an on-screen menu of instructions.

For the more experienced hand (pun intended), Colossus offers more than average competition. So you could get a few useful hours of practice in before that Wednesday Bridge night. The competition which the PCW puts up against lone players might not be as good as Omar Sharif but it will take your skill to an acceptable limit in order to beat it consistently.

Other recommended titles in this geme genre are:

BRIDGE PLAYER GALACTICA
£29.95 CP Software (0993) 823463
COLOSSUS CHESS
£17.99 CDS Software (0302) 321134
CYRUS II CHESS
£15.95 Amsoft (0279) 454555



Use Colossus Bridge to brush up your skills for the real thing!

CLASSIC GAMES
£19.95 CP Software (0993) 823463 (a compilation of Bridge, Chess, Backgammon, and Draughts)

COLOSSUS BRIDGE
PLAY LEVEL 4/5
RANGE OF FEATURES 4/5
CHALLENGE 4/5
DOCUMENTATION 4/5

THE COMPLETE HOME ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

£19.95 ● CDS ● 0302 321134

Gather some friends around. Here is your chance to have Backgammon, dominoes, wordsearch puzzles, poker, high-low, pontoon and even darts in one small package. And you'll never have to lose any of the bits and pieces again.

Yes we did say darts. This is one of the strangest things ever seen on the screen of the PCW. A cursor wobbles around the screen, half controlled by you with the cursor keys until you hit the space bar in order to fire the arrow. Fairly weird at first, but it does wonders for your co-ordination.

The backgammon is fairly week but could be a good start for someone who has never played the game before.

The dominoes section is marvellous. For some reason you really will want to beat the PCW into submission in this ancient pub game. Variations on the straightforward game are included. The 'video card arcade' section is gloriously over-named. In reality to get to play the games listed above against the computer without ever having to lose real money. Brush up your skills here before even thinking about playing the real thing.

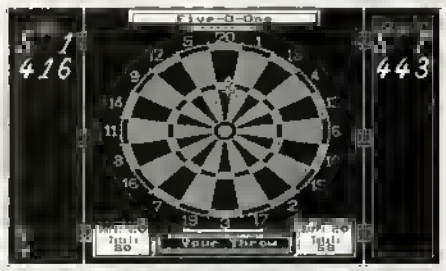
The word search section is great fun. One good tip here is that you can cheat the timer and give yourself time to think by simply pressing the [PTR] key. Various subjects and levels of difficulty are included in the package. Ideal for those people who love puzzling away - it'll also keep the kids quiet for hours, especially if you tell them about the cheat!

Graphically, the Complete Home Entertainment Centre makes great use of the PCW's screen, whether it's the white and black screen of the 9512 or the green and black of the 8000 series. The word search screen alone is superbly done.

Other recommended titles in this game genre are:

CLASSIC GAMES £19.95 CP Software (0993) 823463 (a compilation of Bridge, Chess, Backgammon, and Draughts)

COMPLETE HOME ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE
EASE OF USE 5/5
LASTING INTEREST 4/5
FEATURES 5/5
CHALLENGE 4/5



Bring the game of darts to your PCW with CDS's innovative package

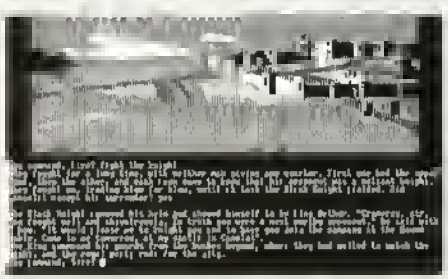
LANCELOT

£19.95 ● Mandarin/Database Software ● 0625 859 444 ● ALL PCWs

When this game first game out a few years ago, the software house (end you thought they just made Fun School 3 and Mini Office!) offered a £5,000 chalice as a prize in a nationwide competition - and that was when £5,000 was worth something. The game sold. The prize was won. Happily though, Lancelot is still an excellent game with or without that incentive.

Basically is is split into three parts all which centre around an Arthurian world in which you play the golden knight, best friend of Arthur - and of course Guinevere. In order to play, you simply type orders in to the computer such as "GO EAST. TAKE THE SWORD". Your character is then sent off, in the computer world, to do just this.

Lancelot has a very pleasant twist though. Unlike many other computer games in which points ere awarded for bashing things, people or creatures, or you receive prizes just for finding



An adventure game on the PCW involves the player in strategic dilemmas

things or escaping. You score points in Lancelot by showing valourous, or chivalrous action and attitude. This presents a series of morel dilemmas, and ethical problems. Do you kill or show mercy? Oo you defend or leave?

The graphics which accompany the game are also of a high quality. They do not move, but hang atmospherically on the screen in order to give you some feel for the beautifully created world in which you play.

If you want to get into this area of adventure, role of interactive computer gaming, you really could do worse than have a go at Lancelot.

Other recommended titles in this game genre are:

GNOME RANGER
£14.95 Level 9 (0344) 487597
SCAPEGHOST
£19.95 Level 9 (0344) 487597
AVON
£14.95 Topologika (0733) 244682
GUILO OF THIEVES (Secondhand only)
THE PAWN (Secondhand only)
TIME AND MAGIK
£14.95 Mandarin (0625) 859444

LANCELOT
ATMOSPHERE 5/5
INTERACTION 5/5
CHALLENGE 4/5
LASTING INTEREST 4/5

Listings

Find that missing file, or calculate the cost of running a car. Martin Le Poidevin shows you how, with this month's Listings!

VOYAGER.BAS by D.Gregg

Pardon?

This program will work with documents produced on any word processor, including LocoScript. Many programs add extra data before, after and during text; this will appear as nonsense in the text window. There is nothing to worry about in this, nor in the fact that some of the file names will have been slightly changed. This is simply CP/M's way of doing its housekeeping.

We've all done it at some time or other. 'Losing' a file is one of the banes of the word processing life. It is the computing equivalent of the longhand author 'forgetting which notebook chapter 3 is in'. If anything, it is more frustrating because there is no way of flicking through a pile of discs short of opening each and every file.

However, thanks to David Gregg's VOYAGER.BAS program, there is now another way of finding that file. All you have to do is run this program, and it will search through all the files on (if you wish) all your drives, looking for a match to a word of phrase which you have chosen, and which you know will be in that missing file.

There are several refinements, as well, which David has listed in the documentation which accompanied the program. Many thanks to him for that.

When the program is loaded, saved, and run, you will be presented with a prompt: 'Instructions please – '. This is the only time that you will have to talk to the computer, and there are then four commands which can be issued by you at this point.

Drive is the first of these, and it allows you to specify which drives hold the discs you want searched. If you know, for instance, that the file you are after is on the disc in drive A:, the command you want is **drive a.** If you only have an a and an m drive, but want to search them both, the command is **drive am.** Incidentally, if you do only have two drives, it is worth changing the **ABM** in line 50 to **AM**, so that the program will automatically search only those two drives.

After each command, press **[RETURN]**, and the screen will be redrawn, the information updated, and the last command displayed.

User will further narrow the search. This allows you to choose which groups you want searched on each disc. For instance, if you always keep your letters in group 2 of your LocoScript discs, and are looking for a letter, the **user 2/9** is the command you want. There are 16 groups (0-15 inclusive) on each disc; LocoScript uses 8..15 as the Limbo area of the main groups. A word of warning here, too: because of the way that the program parses the input, it may well search groups 0,1 and 10 if told to search group 10.

Omit allows you to specify the filetypes you do not want searched. So if you don't want to spend time looking through CP/M command files, BASIC files, system files and .DOC files, tell the computer **omit .doc.com.bas.ems.**

The last command you issue will be **find**, followed by the text that you want the computer to look for. This text can be up to 90 characters long, and there is no need to worry about case (ie capital letters), as the computer will equate upper and lower case text.

When you have issued that command (before you do so, make sure the discs are in the requisite drives), the computer will begin the search. As it goes through each bit of text you will see it flash through a window in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen; above this will be the name of the file being read, with its drive and user group.

On finding a match with the target phrase, it will beep in the traditional manner, and the current file will be added to a list which is maintained on screen; the program then continues searching the next file.

Having finished a sweep, the computer will wait for a keypress. Receiving this, it will return to the opening screen. If you want to search further you will have to reissue the **find** command; to end, simply hit return.

It's the custom

Two other 'customisations' are available within the program; one will print the list of files containing the target phrase to the printer (you must make sure that the printer is always supplied with paper), the other will pause the program after each 'find' and await instructions before going on.

Both are easy to implement – in fact they are already present (and almost correct) in the listing, hidden behind REM commands. To implement the first, remove the REM from the middle of line 680; for the second, remove the REM from the start of line 690.

Use the **EDIT** command if necessary, and don't forget to save them to disc if you want the changes to become standard. To disable the functions, simply reinsert the REMs.

If at any point during the running of the program you want to stop it, the key to press is [STOP].

If you now want to continue, type **CONT**[RETURN] before any other keypress; if you do want to finish, type **OPTION FILES "A":OPTION FILES "0":CLOSE** [RETURN].

Voyager in action. From a disc full of files, the search is narrowed down to just 16 or so

```
10 REM voyager v1.1                                          09BA
20 ON ERROR GOTO 710                                         09C9
30 cls$=CHR$(27)+CHR$(69)+CHR$(27)+CHR$(72)                  0EFD
40 omit$=".COM.EMS.BAS"                                      0BB2
50 drive$="ABM"                                              078E
60 user$="0/1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15"             0ECB
```

```
70 command$="None given"                                                    0BD2
80 DEF FN1oc$(x%,y%,t$)=CHR$(27)+"Y"+CHR$(32+y%)+CHR$(32+x%)+t$             1613
90 a%=0:1c$=""                                                              03B3
```

Tha first aaction of the program sets the usual search path - all drivas, all user groups, and omitting three filetypes

```
100 REM program core                                                        0A08
110 PRINT c1s$                                                              0696
120 PRINT"Voyager One":PRINT                                                0FD6
130 PRINT"Drive(s) are ";drive$;"  User(s) ";user$                          1951
140 PRINT"Not searching extensions ";omit$                                  1756
150 PRINT:PRINT"Last command was - ";command$                               17B7
160 PRINT                                                                   0475
170 LINE INPUT"Instructions please - ",command$                             18AE
180 command$=UPPER$(command$)                                               0DE3
190 IF command$="" THEN PRINT:END                                           0F80
200 IF INSTR(command$,"DRIVE ") THEN drive$=RIGHT$(command$,
(LEN(command$)-6))                                                          237F
210 IF INSTR(command$,"USER ") THEN user$=RIGHT$(command$,
(LEN(command$)-5))                                                          237B
220 IF INSTR(command$,"OMIT ") THEN omit$=RIGHT$
(command$,(LEN(command$)-5))                                               2356
230 IF INSTR(command$,"FIND ") THEN search$=RIGHT$(command$,
(LEN(command$)-5)):s%=LEN(search$):GOSUB 250                                2E53
240 GOTO 100                                                                04AA
```

Line 200 begins to examina your input: if tha program finds one of the commands in the input, it chops up the rest of tha information into a form it can use

```
250 REM find routines                                                       0B72
260 REM Access drives in order                                              0FC8
270 IF INSTR(drive$,"A") THEN OPTION FILES "a":d$="A:":GOSUB 320            1BD5
280 IF INSTR(drive$,"B") THEN OPTION FILES "b":d$="B:":GOSUB 320            1BE9
290 IF INSTR(drive$,"M") THEN OPTION FILES "m":d$="M:":GOSUB 320            1CA7
300 OPTION FILES "a":OPTION FILES "0":PRINT FN1oc$(0,30,CHR$(7)+
"Task completed! Press a key to continue - ");:INPUT "",a$                  389B
310 RETURN                                                                  0500
320 REM Access user areas in order                                          11DF
330 FOR u%=0 TO 15                                                          0755
340 u$=RIGHT$(STR$(u%),(LEN(STR$(u%))-1))                                   0EE6
350 IF INSTR(user$,u$) THEN OPTION FILES STR$(u%):GOSUB 380                 1D15
360 NEXT u%                                                                 04A1
370 RETURN                                                                  0512
```

And this is where the information is used to aelact which driva and groups are to be searched

```
380 REM Access fi1es in current area in order                               179F
390 f%=1                                                                    0269
400 WHILE FIND$("*.*",f%)<>""                                               097F
410 file$=FIND$("*.*",f%)                                                   08D9
420 IF INSTR(omit$,RIGHT$(file$,4)) THEN GOTO 430 ELSE GOSUB 46             01E96
430 f%=f%+1                                                                 02DD
440 WEND                                                                    03FB
450 RETURN                                                                  050E
```

If you are sure that you know part of the name of the file you are looking for, you can alter lines 400 and 410 to include these part names, using ?, CP/M's wildcard

```
460 REM Open and take input from current file                               178¢
470 OPEN "R",1,file$:PRINT FN1oc$(0,27,"Now searching "+d$+file$+"("+u$+")")  1DD0
480 trip%=0:buffer$=SPACE$(s%)                                              0E90
490 GET 1                                                                   03D1
500 WHILE NOT EOF(1) AND trip%=0                                            0EEF
```

The whola secrat of tha program is the use of JETSAM file handling - line 470 'opens' tha current file, and the data can then be extracted

```
510 FOR c%=1 TO 128                                                    0772
520 c$=UPPER$(INPUT$(1,1))                                             091F
530 IF ASC(c$)<32 OR ASC(c$)>127 THEN c$=CHR$(32)                      11A5
540 IF c$=lc$ AND c$=CHR$(32) THEN GOTO 560                            1248
550 IF trip%=0 THEN GOSUB 620                                          0D37
560 lc$=c$                                                             02E5
570 NEXT c%                                                            0484
580 GET 1                                                              03D0
590 WEND                                                               040C
600 CLOSE 1                                                            044C
610 RETURN                                                             0506
620 REM Search latest text string                                      1295
630 buffer$=RIGHT$(buffer$,(s%-1))+c$                                  0ED3
640 PRINT FN1oc$(0,29,buffer$)                                         0DE6
650 IF INSTR(buffer$,search$) THEN GOSUB 670:trip%=1                   1867
660 RETURN                                                             0515
670 REM report successes                                               0E02
680 a%=a%+1:PRINT FN1oc$(0,9+a%,CHR$(7)+d$+file$+"
("+u$+")"):REM 1print d$+file$+"("+u$+")"                              21B9
690 REM PRINT FN1oc$(0,28,"Text found! Continue [Y/N]? ");:INPUT"",a$:IF
UPPER$(a$)<>"Y" THEN GOTO 720 ELSE PRINT FN1oc$(0,28,SPACE$(30))       3F80
700 RETURN                                                             0505
710 REM error trapping                                                 0CA4
720 PRINT:PRINT"Error no. ";ERR;" on Line No. ";ERL                    1928
730 CLOSE:OPTION FILES "a":OPTION FILES "0":END                        1914
```

Beginners!

Never tried typing in a listing before? Put off by complex-looking code and suspect syntax? Well push all of your qualms aside, because this month, you are going to give it a go. The listing on the right is the first in our special section for beginners to BASIC. Follow it to the letter and you'll end up learning how to carry out yet another useful task on your PCW. So, don't just sit there - start typing! We guarantee that you'll enjoy yourself!

STARTERS' ORDERS - PETROL.BAS by D Hawkins

Starters' Orders is for those who have never typed in a listing before. The programs in this section are short, simple and very useful.

The first of these, PETROL.BAS, sent in by Mr D Hawkins, calculates the amount of petrol that your car is using, and at what cost – important information for anyone who owns a car.

The first thing to do is to check back to last month's 'How to type in a Listing' box. Follow the instructions about loading up BASIC, then type in the program. Don't forget to omit the numbers on the right hand side, but do put everything else in accurately.

When you have done that, save the program (by typing **save "petrol.bas"**) and **RUN** it. If you've never typed a listing before, you will be amazed!

So how does it all work? Well, it is very simple. After all, any schoolchild could work out the sums involved. It's just that the computer can do it quicker, and present the answers more neatly. There are three basic processes involved: getting the required information, doing calculations on it, and then displaying it.

The first of these is done in the lines which include the command "INPUT". Seeing that, the computer prints the text (the 'question') after it, and waits for something to be typed in at the keyboard. Whatever this may be, it attaches a label to it. The label is the letter or letters after the comma on that line.

Now you can tell the computer to deal with these inputs by referring to their labels. For instance, line 50 asks for an INPUT, which it labels 'L' (Mr Hawkins has chosen L to remind us, not the computer, of 'Litres'); line 60 divides that L by 4.546, and calls the result 'g' (for Gallons); line 120 takes f (your Finishing mileage) and subtracts s (your Starting mileage) to get the Total mileage (called tot).
And so on with the other calculations (notice that the computer uses the symbol '*' for 'multiply').

The final part of the process is printing to screen. The command for this is quite simply 'PRINT'; if you want text PRINTed it must be enclosed in speechmarks, if you just want to PRINT a number (referred to by its label) the speechmarks are omitted.

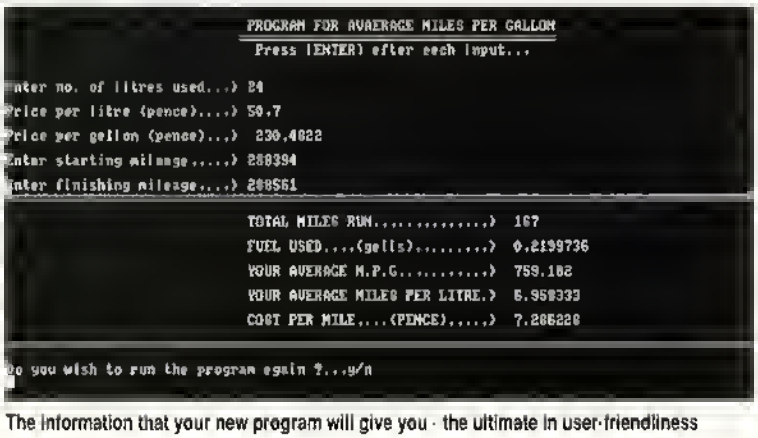
For instance, line 120, once it has calculated 'tot', PRINTs it out, after "TOTAL MILES RUN...". You can also PRINT the result of a calculation, as in line 80, where pr*4.546 is PRINTed directly to screen.

PRINT on its own, by the way, just PRINTs a blank line – it is used to make the screen look neat.

All the rest of the program is designed to make things look good. The command TAB prints a number of spaces (the number in the brackets) before printing the main text of the line; STRING$ prints a series (the first number in the brackets) of special characters (defined by the second number) – in this case forming the double lines across the screen; and line 10 is an often used series of 'characters' which clears the screen.

The last two lines are perhaps the most complex in the whole listing- what they are doing is waiting for and analysing a keypress, then acting on it.

By far the best way of learning how BASIC works, though, is not by reading about it; instead, sit down with the program, watch it in action, and then discover how what you see relates to the code. You'll be hooked in no time. Happy investigating!



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```
10 cls$=CHR$(27)+"E"+CHR$(27)+"H":PRINT cls$                                    10D8
20 PRINT TAB(30)"PROGRAM FOR AVAERAGE MILES PER GALLON"                         1D45
30 PRINT TAB(29)STRING$(38,138)                                                 0DD5
40 PRINT TAB(31)"Press [ENTER] after each input..."                             1AFE
50 PRINT:PRINT:INPUT "Enter no. of litres used...> ",L                          1D10
60 g=1/4.546                                                                    0385
70 PRINT:INPUT "Price per litre (pence)....> ",pr                               1853
80 PRINT:PRINT "Price per gallon (pence)...> ";pr*4.546                         1AF2
90 PRINT:INPUT "Enter starting mileage.....> ",s                                1976
100 PRINT:INPUT "Enter finishing mileage....> ",f                               1934
110 PRINT STRING$(90,138)                                                       0B19
```

This command appears several times in the program. Here it is printing 90 lots of chr$(138) - the double lines across the screen.

```
120 tot=f-s:PRINT:PRINT TAB(30) "TOTAL MILES RUN.............> ";tot           2092
130 PRINT:PRINT TAB(30) "FUEL USED....(galls).........> ";g                     191C
140 mg=tot/g:PRINT:PRINT TAB(30) "YOUR AVERAGE M.P.G.........> ";mg             1F9D
150 mL=tot/L:PRINT:PRINT TAB(30) "YOUR AVERAGE MILES PER LITRE.> ";mL          24E8
160 cost=pr*L/tot:PRINT:PRINT TAB(30) "COST PER MILE....(PENCE).....> ";cost   255A
170 PRINT:PRINT STRING$(90,138)                                                 0F98
180 PRINT:PRINT "Do you wish to run the program again ?...y/n "                 1FB4
190 K$=INKEY$:IF UPPER$(K$)="" THEN 190                                         0FFB
200 IF UPPER$(K$)="Y" THEN GOTO 10 ELSE END                                     13A4
```

The last two lines wait for a keypress. If that keypress is a "y" (which it converts, if necessary, to upper case) the program goes back to line 10, if it is not, it ENDs

CHECK3.BAS by Adrian Wilkins and Peter Crane

Finally this month we reproduce the CHECK3 listing. This is the program that produces all the numbers down the right hand side of the listings that appear on these pages, and helps you to check (as the name would suggest)that you've reproduced the listing accurately.

To use it, you will have to save your programs in ASCII format (do this by adding ,a to the end of the filename when you save it, giving the formula: SAVE "progname.end",a. Now run CHECK3.BAS, and give the name of the ASCII file as the program name. Invent your own name for the file to write to. If you have got your confidence up by typing in the PETROL.BAS listing, you could boost it even further by adding CHECK.BAS to your repertoire. You could even check PETROL.BAS with it - just to make sure!

```
10 INPUT "Program name   ",prog$                                                0F21
20 IF INSTR(prog$,".") = 0 THEN prog$=prog$+".bas"
30 IF FIND$(prog$)=""THEN PRINT "Program not found":PRINT:GOTO 10               21FD
40 OPEN "I",1,prog$                                                             07B0
50 INPUT "name of file to write to";prog2$                                      16A3
60 INPUT "Send to printer Y/N";ask$                                             11A3
70 IF UPPER$(ask$)="Y" THEN prt%=1                                              0F96
80 IF prog$ ="" THEN END                                                        0A0D
90 OPEN "O",2,prog2$                                                            0817
100 WHILE NOT EOF(1)                                                            0928
110 LINE INPUT #1,z$                                                            08A7
120 y$=UPPER$(z$)                                                               05F8
130 check%=0 : j%=0                                                             06BA
140 FOR i% = 1 TO LEN(y$)                                                       09BB
150 y%=ASC(MID$(y$,i%,1)) : IF y%=32 GOTO 200                                   1068
160 IF y% <> &HFC GOTO 180                                                      0A66
170 PRINT "Save it in b**** ASCII!" : END                                       11DC
180 j% = j% + 1                                                                 02FE
190 check% = check% + (y%-32) * (j% MOD 7 +1)                                   0E08
200 NEXT                                                                        0414
210 PRINT #2,z$;TAB(65);HEX$(check%,4)                                          0EAA
220 PRINT z$;TAB(65);HEX$(check%,4)                                             0F33
230 IF prt%=1 THEN LPRINT z$;TAB(65);HEX$(check%,4)                             1795
240 WEND                                                                        03F7
250 CLOSE 1:CLOSE 2: PRINT "done"                                               1041
260 END                                                                         036F
```

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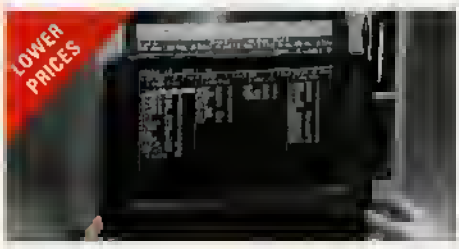

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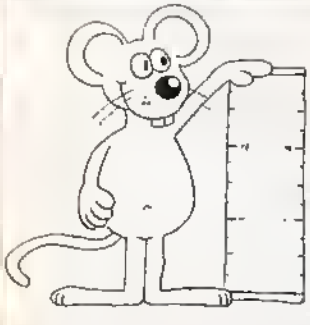

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THE GOOD Software FILE

These pages provide a comprehensive guide to the Amstrad PCW software. Published in three monthly parts, this time it's the turn of Databases, Educational Software, Communications and Programming Languages. We've set out to cover every important piece of software we could lay our hands on, and to give you enough information to decide whether they are suitable for you.

All software will run on both the 9512 and the 8000 series machines, though the former's daisywheel printer cannot print graphical output.

The selection isn't comprehensive, but the software listed here represents what we think is the best of that currently available.

As well as a brief summary of what they do, the main Pluses and Minuses points for each program are listed – Pluses have a ▲ by them, Minuses a ▼.
Those we think are particularly noteworthy have a corner flash. Have fun window shopping!

SPREADSHEETS

If a database replaces an address book, then a spreadsheet replaces the back of an old envelope. It is really an electronic piece of paper which allows you to jot down numbers, juggle them around and analyse the cost benefits of a situation. Vital for businesses, spreadsheets can be useful to home users too: if you want a bank loan you will find that showing your bank manager a spreadsheet printout of your living expenses answers a lot of questions!

A typical spreadsheet has a grid of rows and columns. This grid forms a screenful of cells identified by their column and row numbers, e.g. A3, K36 etc. Each cell can contain a simple number, some text to make the page easier to read, or a formula telling the spreadsheet to work out a number using values from elsewhere. The power of spreadsheets is in this last category, formulae. You can make a cell's value depend on the value of cells above it, or to the left of it, and this value is then automatically updated if changes are made to the other cells.

So how do you choose between the various spreadsheets? One difference is sheet size, i.e. the number of cells you are allowed to work with. You'll need a few hundred for home use, and 1000 or more for business use. Another area is the range of formulae that you can use – all spreadsheets allow simple column and row totalling, but with some you can get complex statistical analyses too. As with all software, think very carefully what you will need before choosing.

MINI OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

£49.95 • Database Software • 0625 859333

Mini Office is a suite of five integrated programs – database, word processor, graphics module, comms package, and a very good spreadsheet. Broadly similar to SuperCalc in operation with usual features of auto or manual recalculation, replicating of rows/columns, powerful range of arithmetic functions etc. Printout is a strong point – rows/columns can be put into italic/bold etc, and prints draft, NLQ or even sideways! Can't sort and can't just save data or structure of a spreadsheet, but maximum size of spreadsheet is claimed to be 320k. You can use the data from a spreadsheet in the graphics module directly. The manual is, however, pretty useless.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Good, full-featured easy to use spreadsheet
- ▲ Prints in draft, NLQ or even sideways
- ▲ Maximum size of spreadsheet 320k
- ▲ Can transfer data directly to graphics module
- ▲ Can drive 24-pin printouts
- ▼ 'Save' options not as versatile as SuperCalc

CRACKER TURBO

POWERFUL

£49.00 • Paperback Software
0245 265017

A spreadsheet designed with advanced calculating power firmly in mind, including statistical functions. The screen layout is totally defined by the user, and cell value calculations can almost be full programs, e.g DO ... WHILE. It might prove too complex if all you want is simple spreadsheet operations. The screen messages are very helpful though. Turbo is claimed to be faster than Cracker 2 though sometimes isn't noticeably so

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Can cope with very complex formulae
- ▲ Flexible screen format defined by the user
- ▲ On-screen prompts are very clear
- ▲ Graphs/charts can be automatically produced
- ▼ Documentation is large, but obscure and confusing
- ▼ You've got to do a lot of work just to get started
- ▼ Very complex for quick, simple applications
- ▼ Needs some programming skills to get the most out of it
- ▼ Free workspace is on the small side (17k) although memory is used efficiently

SUPERCALC 2

BEST GENERAL BUY

£69.95 • Amsoft/Sorcim
091 510 8787

The best selling spreadsheet, officially endorsed by Amstrad. SuperCalc 2 is broadly similar to ScratchPad Plus, but it has a smaller workspace and is less flexible about the allowed spreadsheet dimensions.
You can store sequences of commands for repetitive calculations. Price includes VAT and p&p.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Excellent manual – sections for beginners and experts.
- ▲ Stores commands to run from files
- ▲ "Data Interchanger" allows you to transfer spreadsheet data to other applications
- ▲ Comprehensive range of calculation functions available
- ▲ Screen can be split into 2 windows
- ▼ Spreadsheet is limited by memory size
- ▼ No graphical output facilities

FIRST CALC

EASY TO USE

£29.95 • Minerva Systems
392 437756

Touted as a quick and simple to use program for the beginner, this is nevertheless quite a powerful spreadsheet, with a large capacity, ability to replicate formulae, export etc. Really it's not vastly more user-friendly than the rest but a good value package all the same.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ A lot of program for the money
- ▲ Good tutorials with demo files
- ▲ Simple to use but reasonably sophisticated
- ▼ Not much easier to use than more powerful packages
- ▼ Program is limited by the memory capacity of the PCW (300 – 400 filled cells)

GRAPHICS

You can use a graphics package to create and store diagrams and drawings on disc, to be amended, adjusted or printed out at will.

There are three main types of graphics package: art, technical drawing and graph plotting programs. In art packages the emphasis is on designs and pictures, with freehand drawing facilities, a selection of pretty text fonts and a variety of patterns to fill areas with. These are made much more effective and easier to use if you have a mouse.

Technical drawing packages concentrate on shapes, such as squares and polygons, lines and labels. Finally

graph plotters will take your data and turn them into bar charts, pie charts and so on. 9512 owners will have to buy a dot matrix printer to do all this, of course.

MASTER PACK

£79.95 • Database Software • 0625 859333

A combination package, comprising MasterScan (see below) and the old MasterPaint software. MasterPaint is a WIMP environment graphics package (Windows, Icons, Menus, and Pointer) which will run with Kempston, AMX or Electric Studio mice. Usual facilities for drawing curved or straight lines, polygons, boxes, circles and ellipses, and a host of 'fill' patterns. 'Undo' function and eraser facility, plus the ability to zoom in on a part of the picture.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ WIMP environment makes it easy to use
- ▲ Zoom function lets you fine-tune your pictures
- ▲ Good range of effects
- ▲ Undo and erase facilities
- ▼ Text fonts are boring
- ▼ Can't move large blocks with the copy function

MASTERSCAN

£69.95 • Database Software

0625 859333

POWERFUL

A device which clips on to your printer head and scans pictures, sending the digitised result to disc. You can then use the pictures in desktop publications or in other graphics packages, such as MasterPaint. Very useful for newsletter production but the claims for MasterScan as a low-cost fax machine are grandiose – the quality of scanned text is poor if the text is anything less than headline size.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Simple method of getting good digitised graphics
- ▲ Suitable for all desktop publishing programs
- ▲ Contrast control useful
- ▼ Quality of scanned text is bad – no good for faxes
- ▼ Problems with illustrations containing lots of grey

GRAFLINK 2

£24.95 • Philosoft • 0282 870197

Opens up MasterScan possibilities to all DTP and graphics programs. Can also be used independently to scan in large areas of graphics, up to A4 size. Rather complex, perhaps, for the beginner, but ideal for the more serious DTP pundit.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Gives MasterScan a new lease of life
- ▲ Excellent flexibility between speed and quality of scan
- ▲ For the experienced user it is both fast and efficient to use
- ▼ Documentation and menu system unhelpful
- ▼ Takes time and disc space

LIGHTNING BASIC ++

£29.95• CP Software

0993 823463

POWERFUL

A very clever add-on to normal Basic which works on three levels. The first contains all the everyday commands, whilst the second and third levels are used for designing icons, characters and sprites. There is something in it for everyone, whether an experienced Basic programmer or a beginner.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Simple and easy to use
- ▲ Makes simple Basic programs look really professional
- ▲ Good fun to use
- ▼ Documentation can be unclear
- ▼ Printed output is coarse draft quality
- ▼ Can only cope with simple graphics

COMPLEMENT FONTS & BORDERS

£12.50 • Dragonfly Designs • 0603 890195

Although it can be used with all the main DTP packages, this latest complement disc was designed to work alongside Stop Press. The 11 fonts supplied on the disc show consistent good design and artistic flair and are easily loaded.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ The fonts provide a very professional finish.
- ▲ It is possible to rotate and reverse elements.
- ▲ Very user-friendly.
- ▼ Setting up borders tends to be difficult and time-consuming
- ▼ Printed output could be better (but it is still above average).

SIGNWRITER

£29.95 • Wight Scientific • 081 858 2699

Offers the widest range of features of any of the poster printing programs. Signwriter provides a range of 20 fonts, some of them very imaginative. Ideal for posters.

PLUSES •MINUSES

- ▲ You can redesign fonts and design your own symbols.
- ▲ A wide range of international fonts is available
- ▼ Not very user-friendly.
- ▼ Font design is slow.

STOP PRESS

£49.95 • AMS • 0625 878888

Though touted as a DTP program, Stop Press is an excellent graphics package. Can present data in the form of graphs, pie charts etc , and has the usual range of facilities to draw and fill triangles, boxes and so on plus a very good 'zoom' option which lets you examine the effect of changes in great detail.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Good graph drawing facilities
- ▲ Can design your own area fill patterns
- ▲ Good range of clip art, which you can modify if you wish
- ▲ Can superimpose one image on another
- ▲ Works with AMX and Kempston mice
- ▲ Is also a good DTP package
- ▼ Undoing wrongly placed text is difficult

AYE PLUS PLUS

£29.95 • CP Software • 0993 823463

The full title is 'All you ever wanted to know about graphics, the universe and everything on PCW 8256/8512 ... but were afraid to ask PLUS' Phew. A wide range of little programs to do graphic things on the PCW like smooth scrolling, defining windows, moving sprites around. The programs are written in assembler, with the source code provided if you want to see how to program them for yourself and adapt the routines.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Wide range of useful functions
- ▲ Can be used from BASIC, machine code, or other language
- ▲ The assembler source code is supplied
- ▲ Inexpensive
- ▲ Good manual
- ▲ CP don't mind you using their routines in programs you sell
- ▼ A bit long-winded to use from BASIC
- ▼ No easy way of loading just the routines you want

PAGE MAGIC, DISC IMAGE KIT, DISC POSTER KIT

£12.50 each • HD Design • 04867 81394

Clip art collection with a difference. This suite of three ready-made design aids offers a wide range of additions to your text. Page Magic contains a series of sporting images and digitised male and female shots, together with a handy selection of frames and borders. Image Kit has a range of images, from Spitfires to Buddha, whilst Poster Kit offers an excellent collection of print styles, which reproduce with astounding clarity.

PLUSES

- ▲ Poster Kit contains ready made words such as 'Fete' and 'Sale'
- ▲ Excellent visual clarity

SKETCHPAD II

£15.95 • Composit Software • 0952 595436

A nice little package for those who only need a simple graphics capability. Line, circle and box facilities are all supported, but curved lines are tricky. Smaller shapes and icons can be produced using the shape designer, and the final product can be tidied up using the zoom facility. Will be of interest to musicians who use the Composers Pen package - the two are easily compatible.

PLUSES •MINUSES

- ▲ Ideal for the novice
- ▲ Can be used with or without mouse
- ▲ Includes zoom facility
- ▲ Integrates with Composers Pen to neaten up copy
- ▼ Limited range of paper sizes
- ▼ Execution of some functions can be very time consuming

PCWDRAW

£39.95 • HTB Computers Ltd • 0794 56297

A good all round graphics package. All the usual facilities available, with the bonus that it now supports the Kempston mouse, turning a good package into a powerful one.

PLUSES •MINUSES

- ▲ Zoom functions for close work
- ▲ Detail editing included
- ▲ Large working screen means you see things in context
- ▼ Mouse could be more fully implemented
- ▼ Documentation rather scatty

VIDI PCW

£79.99 • Rombo Productions • 0506 414631

A very similar package to the Electric Studio digitiser; not much to choose between the two. Rombo's works with the Fleet Street Editor, Electric Studio's with Newsdesk International.

PLUSES • MINUSES

- ▲ Text can be inserted from within the program
- ▲ 16 levels of shading
- ▲ Can print images to screen in defined order and time apart.
- ▼ Unhelpful manual

MD CLEARTEXT

£13.50 • Exemplar Design • n/a

Designed for use in conjunction with MicroDesign , MD Cleartext allows you to create your own type styles to liven up your work. There is a range of non-English fonts on offer as well, including the accents in the French, German and Spanish languages. An excellent add-on to an excellent DTP program.

PLUSES

- ▲ Developed in conjunction with Creative Technology them selves, resulting in a comprehensive appreciation of ▲
- ▲ MicroDesign's workings.
- ▲ No jagged edges or loss of definition when large characters are printed out
- ▲ Produced from a quality and highly reputed source

GAMES

The choice of games for the PCW is far from extensive in comparison with what is on offer for other m achines. However, the range is widening, and there is an increase in graphics-based games, replacing the text-only adventures which currently dominate the market for the PCW. Text-based games rely heavily on the use of parsers, which aid adventure navigation by word analysis. The ability of a parser, is, not surprisingly, responsible for the success or failure of a game. What follows is a selection of some of the best games currently available for the PCW, together with a marks out of five evaluation.

Some pieces of software which have graced these pages for years are now discontinued - but a diligent search may find copies residing with software distributors and retailers.

AVON

£14.95 • Topologika • 0733 244682 • All PCWs

Based on the world end work of Shakespoare, this text-ouly adventure puts mauy a puzzler to eveu the most well-versed student of the bard. A handy help mode will get you out of the tighter corners. Compulsiva gemeplay!

ADDICTIVENESS	4/5	ATMDSPHERE	4/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

BRIAN CLOUGH'S FORTUNES

£14.99 • CDS • 0302 321134 • All PCWs

A cross between Monopoly aud Football Menager, combiuing board end PCW. Go for league and cup success – but keep the bank meuager happy too!

GRAPHICS	2/5	ADDICTIVENESS	4/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

BRIDGE PLAYER GALACTICA 2150

£29.95 • CP Software • 0993 823463

All PCWs

The upgraded Bridge Player 2000. Excellout Tutor mode with hands wutten by Nichiola Gardener of the London Bridge School. Relains strong play

GRAPHICS	3/5	STRENGTH DF PLAY	4/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

CLASSIC GAMES 4

£19.95 • CP Software • 0993 823463

All PCWs

A compilation of classic 'thinking' games ou one disc: Clock Chess, Bridge Player, Backgammon and Draughts. Excellent value for mouey.

CLOCK CHESS 89

£19.95 • CP Software • 0993 823463

All PCWs

Que of tho beltor PCW chess programs. You can alter the level of play by specifyiug e time limit. Capable of very strong play and the 3D graphics are excellent.

GRAPHICS	4/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	5/5
RANGE DF FEATURES	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

COLOSSUS CHESS 4.0

£17.99 • CDS Software • 0302 321134

All PCWs

A very strong chess game which maneges to use time which you speud thinking to plan its stralegy. Bags of features, including blindfold games.

GRAPHICS	3/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

CROSSGRID

£14.95 • David Greenhough Computing • 0274 636475 • All PCWs

"Crossword puzzles without clues" is how the packaging describes the program. Instead of the clues, you get a grid of numbers, each standing for a different letter. Can you work out which stands for which?

EASE OF USE	5/5	ADDICTIVENESS	5/5
DOCUMENTATION	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

CYRUS II CHESS

£15.95 • Amsoft • 0279 454555 • All PCWs

Chess game with e stunningly detailed 3-D display. The play is quite strong, with several handy features like allowing you to take back a move.

GRAPHICS	5/5	STRENGTH OF PLAY	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

DOUBLE T PATIENCE

£14.95 • Thurston Techniques • 0395 277496

All PCWs

Six well-knowu card games (from Pokar Patience to Pairs) to be played either alone or against the computer.

GRAPHICS	2/5	ADDICTIVENESS	5/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

FORESTLAND

£14.95 • Classic Quests/Audiogenic

081 861 1166

You're in a forest and you're not sure how you got there, whether you are asleep or awake, and how the devil to get out. You need your wits about you in this game to puzzle your way out of the wicked wood.

CHALLENGE	3/5	ADDICTIVENESS	4/5
ATMOSPHERE	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

GNOME RANGER

£14.95 • Level 9 • 0344 487597 • All PCWs

You follow the adventures of Ingrid Bottomlow, the intrepid gnome, through a fairy tale landscape full of compelling puzzles. Humorous and rather quaint.

ATMDSPHERE	3/5	INTERACTIDN	3/5
CHALLENGE	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

GOBLIN TOWERS

£14.95 • Classic Quests/Audiogenic

081 861 1166

A game for beginners to adventuring, Goblin Towers sees you as a brave warrior , seeking to retrieve treasure from a goblin-ridden castle.

ATMOSPHERE	3/5	ADDICTIVENESS	3/5
CHALLENGE	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	9/15

GRAND SLAM

£14.95 (plus £1.50 p&p) • Lgi'stiek • 0223 423456 • All PCWs

A challenging and realistic version of lawn tennis, calling for good manual dexlouly aud tactics. Choice of five venues including Wimbledon. Only drawbacks are the poor racket control and the irritating ball boys, who slow the game down.

RANGE DF FEATURES	4/5	CHALLENGE	5/5
INTERACTIVENESS	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

HEAD COACH

£22.95 • DGA/Coda • 061 330 0184 • All PCWs

You coach eu American Football team, picking players and deciding tactics against real NFL teams and players. Incredibly detailed simulation – a must for NFL fans!

ATMDSPHERE	4/5	INTERACTION	5/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

HOME ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

£19.99 • CDS • 0302 321134 • All PCWs

Five-in-one games compilatiou, featuriug darts, backgammon, dominoes, cards and a wordsearch game. Excellent graphics, original ideas and presentation – darts has never yet been available as a game for the PCW.

EASE DF USE	5/5	ADDICTIVENESS	4/5
FEATURES	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

INGRID'S BACK

£19.95 • Level 9 • 0344 487597 • All PCWs

Sequel to Gnome Ranger in which Ingrid returns to Little Moaning to find it under threat from Jasper Quickbuck who wants to replace it with a yuppie estate. Adventure in 3 parts.

ATMDSPHERE	4/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

KNIGHTORC

£19.95 • Level 9 • 0934 814450 • All PCWs

You are an orc in this typical Level 9 adventure by the name of Gridleguts. An addictive game with lots of action, plenty to explore and mind-bending puzzles.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	5/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

LANCELOT

£14.95 • Mandarin/Level 9 • 0625 859333

All PCWs

A game in three parts which recounts the adventures of Lancelot.. Manufacturers have vividly created an Arthurian world in which points are awarded for displays of chivalry, valour or benevolence. The game permits a full range of powerful commands.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	5/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

MYTH

£22 (membership) • Magnetic Scrolls

0279 726585 • All PCWs

Join Official Secrets and you can have access to this excellent adventure game, where you find yourself cast as Poseidon – minus his godly powers! Rescue your fate from the lap of the gods.

ADDICTIVENESS	4/5	ATMDSPHERE	4/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

PATTERN PUZZLES

£11.50 • HTB Computers Ltd • 0506 414631 • All PCWs

A collection of intriguing puzzles requiring you to return order to a grid of patterned squares. Similar to the tile games found in Christmas crackers, except that here there is no blank space to help you shuffle things around - instead the rows and columns wrap round in various different ways. Mind bending!

EASE DF USE	3/5	DDCUMENTATIDN	2/5
RANGE OF FEATURES	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

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NOTES ON AMSTRAO PCW9512
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Arthur Gibberd, 31 Gresley Road, Coventry, CV2 IBD

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RETURN TO OOOM

£14.95 • Topologika • 0733 244682

All PCWs

Sequel to Countdown to Doom; you're back on the planet Doomawangera again to track down the ambassador Regina who has been kidnapped by some very unpleasant robots. Another text-only adventure game.

ATMDSPHERE	3/5	INTERACTION	2/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

SCAPEGHOST

£19.95 • Level 9 • 0934 814450 • All PCWs

You're a ghost with a mission – to catch the crooks who framed you on earth.You tremp your way through spooky cemeteries – solve the puzzles and brave the vivid graphics, and justice will be done.

ATMDSPHERE	4/5	CHALLENGE	4/5
GRAPHICS	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

SIR PERCEVAL

£14.95 • Logi'stick • 0223 423456 • 8000s only

An action game from the court of King Arthur. Fight the nasties in the castle, pick up the treasure, and make your way to the next level. Good medievel fun with pretty good graphics to boot.

EASE OF USE	4/5	RANGE OF FEATURES	4/5
CHALLENGE	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

SPORTING TRIANGLES

£19.99 • CDS • 0302 321134 • All PCWs

A computer implementation of the TV quiz show. Includes general, Hit for Six and Buzzer rounds, and choice of specialist areas. Amusing graphics, but some of the questions are quite difficult for the average sports fan, to say the least.
Up to three players.

EASE OF USE	4/5	CHALLENGE	4/5
PRESENTATION	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER

£17.99 • CDS • 0302 321134 • All PCWs

Surprisingly realistic simulation of both pool and snooker games – not as easy as it looks either! Foul shots, breaks and allows for spin, side, strength of shot. Good value, despite all the balls being greens!

GRAPHICS	2/5	ADDICTIVENESS	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	3/5

TANK ATTACK

£19.99 • CDS • 0302 321134 • All PCWs

A strategy game for the PCW. A combination of imaginative computer graphics and old-style board game, complete with plastic tanks. Even includes on screen news bulletins! For up to four players.

EASE OF USE	4/5	FEATURES	5/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

TERRACOM

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All PCWs

An excellent intergelectic struggle between you, and the evil emperor Keshodex. You have to destroy his sky fortress in what can best be described as a game of cosmic squash! Regular tussles with Kashodex's space module leave you fighting for life!

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	ADDICTIVENESS	4/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

TIME AND MAGIK

£14.95 • Mandarin Software • 0625 859333

All PCWs

An excellent trilogy of time travel adventure which can be played in any order. Your task is to protect the history of the world from the destructive timelords –another very atmospheric game.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

TERRACOM

£14.95 • logi'stick UK • 0223 423456

All PCWs

An excellent intergalactic struggle between you, and the evil emperor Kashodex. You have to destroy his sky fortress in what can best be described as a game of cosmic squash! Regular tussles with Keshodex's space module leave you fighting for life!

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	ADDICTIVENESS	4/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

TIME AND MAGIK

£14.95 • Mandarin Software • 0625 859333

All PCWs

An excellent trilogy of time travel adventure which can be played in any order. Your task is to protect the history of the world from the destructive timelords –another very atmospheric game.

ATMOSPHERE	5/5	INTERACTION	4/5
CHALLENGE	5/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

TIMES CROSSWORDS - VOLUME 4

£19.95 • Akom Ltd • 081 852 4575 • All PCWs

Yes- the Times crossword for the PCW. No trouble about the basic material, of course - but there are a few eccentricities in the implemenation. Most can be ignored, but the fact that you can only have one clue on display at a time can take some getting used to.

CHALLENGE	4/5	EASE OF USE	4/5
DOCUMENTATION	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

TOMAHAWK

£19.95 • Digita Int. • 0276 684959 • All PCWs

A sophisticated Apache helicopter flight simulator. Impressive cockpit view graphics as you engage in combat missions – can be used with a joystick too.

GRAPHICS	4/5	ADDICTIVENESS	3/5
LASTING APPEAL	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

UK TRIVIA TREASURE HUNT

£24.95 • IMC Software • 0604 54814

All PCWs

Pit your wits against the program in this carefully planned game. The quest for success is tricky ; correct answers take you to various locations nationwide.

ATMOSPHERE	3/5	GRAPHICS	3/5
CHALLENGE	3/5	INTERACTION	2/5

ULTIMATE QUIZ

£14.95 • DGC Software • 0274 636475

All PCWs

Ten quizzes on topics as diverse as the Highway Code and the Italian language. Clean screens and an easy to use program make Ultimate Quiz excellent entertainment and good value for money too.

GRAPHICS	5/5	CHALLENGE	4/5
LASTING APPEAL	3/5	VALUE VERDICT	5/5

WITCH HUNT

£11.50 • Classic Quests/Audiogenic

081 861 1166

In Witch Hunt, you have been changed from an evil scheming roller into a positively charming person – and you are not at all happy about it.To be returned to your former state, you have to gather the ingredients to give to the warty witch who can convert you back.

ATMDSPHERE	3/5	ADDICTIVENESS	3\5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	10/15

WORLD OF SOCCER

£22.95 • DGA/Coda • 061 330 0184 • All PCWs

A soccer management simulation game; you select squads of players for your international team and guide them through the European and World Cups. Gives a good insight into the kind of strategic thinking required.

ATMDSPHERE	4/5	INTERACTION	3/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

YES CHANCELLOR!

£19.95 • Topologika • 0733 244682 • All PCWs

Become Norman Lamont for a day with this intense game/challenge written in BASIC. Whether it's budget balance or inflation control at stake, the Unions and the voters still have to be kept happy.

ATMDSPHERE	3/5	INTERACTION	3/5
CHALLENGE	4/5	VALUE VERDICT	4/5

NEXT MONTH

The guide continues with the categories of SPREADSHEETS GRAPHICS and GAMES. The month after will cover WORD PROCESSORS, ACCOUNTS, UTILITIES and DTP, and the month after that it's back to this month's topics. Our intention is to keep publishing the three parts of the guide in rotation, updating it each month to include all new products. If you would like to see other sections of the guide, back issues of 8000 Plus are available at £1.75 each. Meanwhile, if you are aware of any significant errors or omissions in the file as published, please let us know. We intend to maintain it as THE authoritative guide to PCW software.

Arnor's 1991 PCW Software Sale

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Protext v5.0 is now available for the PC at a special upgrade price of £110 (inc. VAT) for all PCW users. Send us your original *Protext* or *Locoscript* disc with your order.

Protext has been designed as e PC program, not as an imitation of e PCW program and thus complements other PC software much better than Locoscript PC.

Features include justification and centring ot any mixture of different printing fonts, including proportional; extensive language support including Eastern European languages; multiple file editing; split screen editing; index and contents; tootnotes and newspaper column printing.

For further details please contact Arnor. Protext 5.0 is available for IBM PC and compatibles, Amiga, Atari ST and Acorn Archimedes.

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Tipoffs

Give yourself the advantage with Tipoffs!

Unforced errors in LocoScript? Can't see the point in BASIC? Out of court in CP/M? Don't just make a racket and go to watch the tennis on TV instead, come to Tipoffs, the pages that always give a great service.

You'll find a volley of tips on LocoScript, LocoMail, LocoSpell, BASIC, Micro Design, Protext, SuperCalc and whole set of other programs. Don Phillips of Bridlington nets £30 for his way of making instant diaries in LocoFile.

If you know any smart tips in LocoScript, LocoMail, LocoFile, or any other well-known PCW program, tell us – you could win hard cash. Write to *Tipoffs, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2XF*. And just to encourage you further, it's Freepost!

Change of program

Protext is an ideal tool for writing program code in compiled languages such as C, Pascal, Modula etc. But it's actually more convenient to write them in 'document' mode than the built-in 'program' mode, supposedly supplied specially for writing programs!

The reason is that program mode sets tabs at every 8th position, so multiply indented blocks end up too far over to the right. The answer is to write in document mode with a ruler line that has tabs set every three spaces. To stop the ruler line being compiled with the code, enclose it in comment markers (e.g. { and } in HiSoft Pascal). You can then put other commands within these comment markers: commands which, for example, set condensed print, set top and bottom margins, set start and finish pages for printing etc. Also, the [PAGE] key works, which it doesn't in program mode.

Basil Pigg, Bath, Avon

Numbers game

If you try to name a LocoScript group with a name that begins with a number, the PCW beeps and won't allow it. Frustrating if you want to name a group, say, 26JUL91.

The answer is simple. Rename the group as usual (press [f4] in LocoScript 2 or [f5] in LocoScript 1) and give the new name of the group as A23JUN91. But before pressing [ENTER], cursor back and delete the initial A. Press [ENTER] and the group takes the required name.

Bruce Latto, Ellon, Aberdeenshire

Count on this

A reminder that owners of LocoScript 2.28/2.29 and later (the version number is shown when you start up LocoScript) can do a word count using LocoSpell.

Edit the file to be counted and press [f7] selecting 'automatic addition' then [ENTER]. After a few minutes LocoSpell will show you how many words are in the document; to leave press [ENTER] then [EXIT], select 'abandon edit', and [ENTER].

It takes a while though – up to five minutes per 1000 words.

Bill Heilbronn, Leamington Spa, Warwicks

Better by design

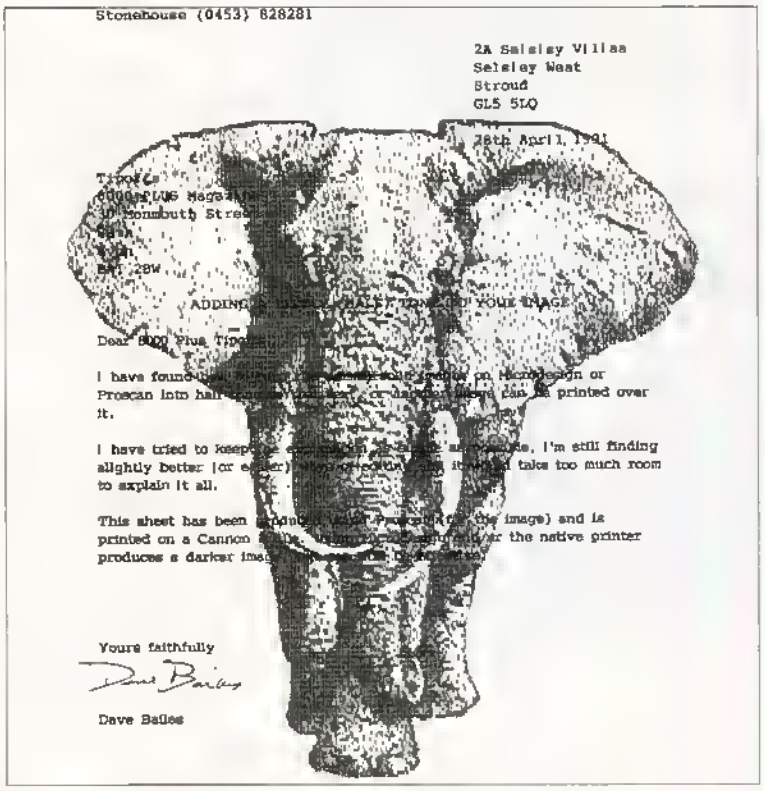
It is possible to turn normal black graphic images in Micro Design or ProScan into grey tones so that another image, or text, can be printed over it. The result can look very effective. Here is how.

1. Load the .MDA image (loading it x2, then saving it as a new .MDA, loading x2 again etc if necessary to make it big enough for your requirements).
2. Draw **block** box around the image and **invert**. Go to **design** over part of the image. Make sure some of the non-inverted page is visible for use as a palette.
3. Select one of the patterns available, remembering that you are working in 'negative'; white dots on the black background will end up as black dots on white. Adjust the size of the pattern if it proves necessary for your needs.
4. Using the largest brush **paint** in **transparent** mode over the edge between the inverted portion and the white on the screen (just to test the effect). The black will remain solid; the pattern will only appear on the white. If the effect is as desired carry on and paint over all the white parts of the image.
5. Go back to **layout**. Select **block** and **invert** over the whole previously inverted area. It disappears but don't panic, it isn't lost. Select **design** again and then go back to **layout** and it reappears.
6. Since all **write** modes in Micro Design and ProScan are fixed in EXOR mode, if you want to print solid black text over the new image you must either a) print the image out, create a new page with the text and then print this over the image printout, or b) save the image, create a page of text and reload the image over it in **transparent**. Method a) will work with LocoScript, of course.
7. Editing the image in **zoom** is best done after step 5. There are fewer pixels to play with. If loading a Micro Design generated page of text (or another image) over the grey-tone image, do this before editing – then you don't edit pixels that are going to be hidden by the text/image anyway.
8. With larger images, 'editing' can be done on the **design** screen by using the smallest paint brush and either white (to remove) or a matching pattern to add (remembering that this will be the inverse of that used in step 3).

The whole thing works best in ProScan (more painting shades) and prints out better on a printer that can achieve 'half pixel' reproduction such as a Canon BJ10e.

However, if you haven't got an external printer, don't despair; the PCW8256 or 8512 printer will produce the effect you're after quite adequately.

Dave Bailes, Stroud, Gloucestershire



You can get Micro Design or ProScan to produce background effects like this. Very impressive!

Printing press

How can I get my PCW8256 and my Star NL10 Printer to work together? I have a CPS8256 interface and cable.
K Riley, Andover, Hants
8000 Plus: Buy LocoScript 2 (£29.95 from Locomotive on 0306 740606) which will work with the Star NL10. The appropriate printer driver – FX80_NLQ.PRI – is supplied on the Loco 2 master discs, and the FX80."IB character set is also on the disc. Instructions are in the printer guide supplied free with the manual (available from Locomotive if you didn't receive one).

Newer printers may need the Printer Support Pack, £29.95 from Locomotive, to work with LocoScript 2.

No message!

I have installed extra memory and a B drive to make my PCW8256 into an 8512. Unfortunately I have lost the 'Drive is A:' message that used to appear at the bottom right – what's gone wrong?
J Crawshaw, Yarm, Cleveland
8000 Plus: Nothing. The message doesn't appear on an 8512.

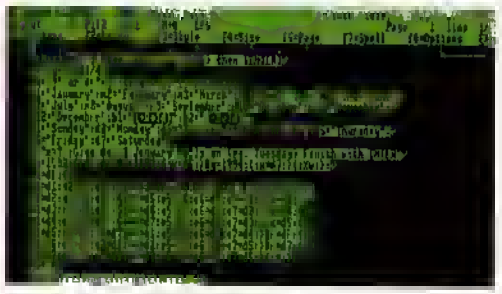
Dear diary

Following the BASIC listing that was published in Tipoffs recently which produces a diary for any year in LocoScript, here's the equivalent in LocoMail. The routine here will produce a document consisting of 365 headings, one for each day of the year (366 in a leap year). It will work out leap years 40 years either side of 1991 and insert the extra day automatically.

Type the in the listing shown and save as say DIARY. Note that the item about halfway down (l="|") is a letter l; apart from that, when in doubt, you probably want a figure 1 not a letter l.

To produce your diary, move the cursor over DIARY in the disc manager and press **F** for fill. You are asked for the year; type it (eg. **1991**) then [ENTER]. Next you are asked for the day that 1 January falls on. Type it (eg. **Tuesday**) and [ENTER]. Shortly you see the days, dates and months of each day of the year being inserted one by one into the document. Save it when it finishes as say DIARY.91 which can be edited, printed out etc. as a normal document. Fill DIARY again for other years.

You can modify the listing so the format of the diary suits your requirements if you alter the text between the two quote marks that follow 'page=' (about halfway down the listing). As it stands it produces one blank line and then a 'new page' command. You can also alter the style that each day heading appears in by changing the items in quotes that follow 'b1' and 'b2' (near the beginning of the listing). At the moment they put the day heading into bold; you can change it so the day appears in underline, double width proportional italic bold etc.



This is the first page of the LocoMail listing...

...and the second page of the listing, when filled...

...produces a diary on disc with one day to a page. For almost any year!

```
f(+Mail)y=? ; Give year (eg. 1991)
then press Enter [RETURN]
k=[[y-1988]/4] [RETURN]
#k="?" or k="-?":<:feb=30:>
<:feb=29:>: [RETURN]
m1="January": m2="February":
m3="March": m4="April":
m5="May": m6="June": m7="July":
m8="August": m9="September":
m10="October": m11="November":
m12="December"; b1="(+Bold)" :
b2="(-Bold)" [RETURN]
d1="Sunday": d2="Monday":
d3="Tuesday": d4="Wednesday":
d5="Thursday":d6="Friday":
d7="Saturday" [RETURN]
w="x=? ;Give day 1 January falls on
(eg. Tuesday) Finish with Enter"
[RETURN]
#y=1992:<:x=d4:> #y=1993:<:x=d6:>
#y=1994:<:x=d7:> <:%w:>:
[RETURN]
#x=d1:<: [RETURN]
e1=d1: e2=d2: e3=d3: e4=d4: e5=d5:
e6=d6: e7=d7:>#x=d2:<: [RETURN]
e1=d2: e2=d3: e3=d4: e4=d5: e5=d6:
e6=d7: e7=d1:>#x=d3:<: [RETURN]
e1=d3: e2=d4: e3=d5: e4=d6: e5=d7:
e6=d1: e7=d2:>#x=d4:<: [RETURN]
e1=d4: e2=d5: e3=d6: e4=d7: e5=d1:
e6=d2: e7=d3:>#x=d5:<: [RETURN]
e1=d5: e2=d6: e3=d7: e4=d1: e5=d2:
e6=d3: e7=d4:>#x=d6:<: [RETURN]
e1=d6: e2=d7: e3=d1: e4=d2: e5=d3:
e6=d4: e7=d5:>#x=d7:<: [RETURN]
e1=d7: e2=d1: e3=d2: e4=d3: e5=d4:
e6=d5: e7=d6:><:*:>: [RETURN]
l="|" [RETURN]
m=m1: day=1: num=1: count=1: sp="
" [RETURN]
page=" [RETURN]
[RETURN]
[ALT] [RETURN]": [RETURN]
loop=" #day=1:<:d=e1:>
#day=2:<:d=e2:> #day=3:<:d=e3:>
#day=4:<:d=e4:> #day=5:<:d=e5:>
#day=6:<:d=e6:> #day=7:<:d=e7:>:
#day=7:<:day=0:> [RETURN]
b1:d:sp:num: [RETURN]
sp:m:b2:page: [RETURN]
num=[num+1]: [RETURN]
day=[day+1]: [RETURN]
#m=m1 and num=32: <: num=1:
m=m2: >#m=m2 and num=feb: <:
num=1: m=m3: >#m=m3 and num=32:
<: num=1: m=m4: >#m=m4 and
num=31: <: num=1: m=m5: >#m=m5
and num=32: <: num=1: m=m6:
>#m=m6 and num=31: <: num=1:
m=m7: >#m=m7 and num=32: <:
num=1: m=m8: >#m=m8 and num=32:
<: num=1: m=m9: >#m=m9 and
num=31: <: num=1: m=m10:
>#m=m10 and num=32: <: num=1:
m=m11: >#m=m11 and num=31: <:
num=1: m=m12: >#m=m12 and
num=32: <: count=0: >: " [RETURN]
%loop@count [RETURN]
```

Don Phillips, Bridlington, Yorks

Spell magic

LocoSpell is thorough but slow; it takes several seconds between each stop at a doubtful word. Many long documents, especially technical or foreign language documents, can involve dozens of words new to LocoScript which are correctly spelt but involve a stop and spell-check; it can therefore be frustrating to spend 20 minutes doing a spell check just to weed out one or two mis-spelt words. Owners of LocoScript 2.28/2.29 and later have a way round though.

Edit the file to be counted and press [f7] selecting 'automatic addition' then [ENTER]. Go for a cup of tea or something while LocoSpell does its stuff. All doubtful words – whether mis-spelt or just correctly spelt ones LocoSpell doesn't know – are added to the user dictionary automatically. After a few minutes LocoSpell will show you how many words are in the document; press [ENTER] to get rid of the message and then press [f7] selecting 'user dictionary upkeep' then [ENTER]. The doubtful words LocoSpell found appear. You may have to scroll through to see them all.

A visual check indicates which words are the genuine mistakes; make a note of what they are. Clear them from the dictionary with the [-] key. Finish with [ENTER] and [EXIT]. Press [ENTER] again to 'update the user dictionary'.

Now you have to find those mis-spelt words. Go back to the top of the document with [SHIFT] [ALT] [PAGE]. Then press [SHIFT] [FIND] giving the mis-spelt as the one to 'find' and the correct spelling as the one to 'exchange' it with. Select 'automatic exchange' and [ENTER]. Repeat for any other mis-spelt words. [EXIT] and [ENTER] to finish.

Sounds involved, but it can save a lot of time on long documents.

Bill Heilbronn, Leamington Spa, Warwicks

AnsibleIndex Plus

The only LocoScript Indexer. AnsibleIndex Plus extracts from your documents (with correct page numbers):

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Time to act

In the 8000 Plus Tips Collection there is a tip showing how to time actions in BASIC – for example, to give someone a ten second time limit in which to reply to a question. You say the date and time can be set using the DATE facility in CP/M. But I want the user to be able to set the time from within the BASIC program so that the PCW can display the time constantly in the top right hand corner while the program is running. How can this be done, please.
Kevin Danby, Leeds, Yorks
8000 Plus: Try the following listing.

```
10  DEF FNT(X) = X-INT(X/16)*6
20  INPUT "Hour (0-23)";h
30  INPUT "Minute (0-59)";m
40  INPUT "Second (0-59)";s
50  ph=0 : WHILE h <> FNt(ph) :
      ph=ph + 1 : WEND
60  pm=0 : WHILE m<>FNt(pm) :
      pm=pm + 1 : WEND
70  ps=0 : WHILE s<>FNt(ps) :
      ps=ps + 1 : WEND
80  POKE 64502!,ph : POKE
      64503!,pm : POKE 64504!,ps
90  HRS = FNT (PEEK (64502!))
100 MINS = FNT (PEEK (64503!))
110 SECS = FNT (PEEK (64504!))
120 PRINT CHR$(27) + "H" + "Time
      is ";
130 PRINT USING "##";HRS; :
      PRINT ":";
140 PRINT USING "##";MINS; :
      PRINT ":";
150 PRINT USING "##";SECS;
160 GOTO 90
```

The line 120 just positions the time message at the top left corner; you can replace this with a line such as PRINT CHR$(27) + "Y" + CHR$(45) + CHR$(52) or whatever to position the time message where you want.

For convenience you may want to make the time-display routine a GOSUB. To do this, just make line 160 have the single word RETURN.

Then, whenever you want to update the time display at a point somewhere further down in the listing, just have a line like
1060 GOSUB 90
and the time is updated and displayed..

Role of the dice

I am writing a game in BASIC and would like a way of simulating two dice rolls to give random results.
Ronald Bell, Stevenage, Herts
8000 Plus: Simple. If you include these lines at the end of your program, then a previous line in the main body of your listing such as
100 GOSUB 1000
will make each of the variables dice1 and dice2 hold an independent, effectively random, equally distributed, number from 1-6.

```
1000      dice1%=RND*6
1010      IF dice1%=0 THEN
dice1%=6
1020      dice2%=RND*6
1030      IF dice2%=0 THEN
dice2%=6
1040      RETURN
```

Each time you run the program, you'll get the same sequence of dice 'rolls'. If you want them to be different each time you run the program, then just include the line
1 RANDOMIZE PEEK (64504!) at the start of the listing..

The hard way

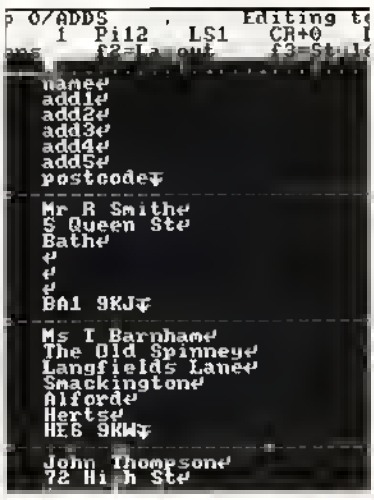
The Vortex 30Mb hard disc is a boon to LocoScript users – all your files on one disc instead of dozens of floppies. The disc partitions itself into four 'drives' and then into groups. However, if you want to move from drive A to drive F, it can take up to two minutes if there are a lot of files in the intermediate directories. Here's quick way round.

In drive A, create a document; leave the name as DOCUMENT.000. Press [f3], select 'move' (by just pressing m [ENTER]) and you are presented with the old name/new name menu. In 'new name', move to the second line and either enter the name of a group in drive F or, if there is an empty group, just enter a group number 0-7. Move to the third line and enter F for drive F. [ENTER] takes you almost immediately to the F drive – a few seconds instead of two minutes!

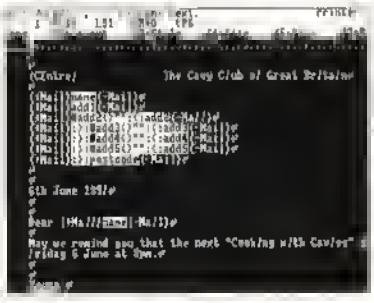
Leslie Rae, Killarmarch, Sheffield

Addressing the problem

I keep my addresses in LocoFile/LocoMail as five items add1-add5, one for the postcode. However, when I use them in a mailmerged letter, any blank items in the address come out as blank lines. How can I get LocoMail to "close up" the blanks so the postcode follows on straight on from the last line of the address, however long it is?
Harry Henthorne, Addiscombe, Surrey



If your name-and-address details are stored in this sort of fashion, with blank lines...



...then this sort of routine makes sure the blank lines don't leave ugly spaces...

```
                    The Cavy Club of Great Britain

Mr R Smith
5 Queen St
Bath
BA1 9KJ


6th June 1991


Dear Mr Smith

May we remind you that the next "Cooking with Cavies" session will be on
Friday 8 June at 8pm.


Yours

A Gouti
Secretary
```

...on the final printout. The result is much tidier, we're sure you'll agree!

8000 Plus: No problem. Suppose your name-and-address file looks like this in LocoScript:

```
name
add1
add2
add3
add4
add5
postcode [ALT] [RETURN]
Mr R Smith
5 Queen St
Bath
(blank)
(blank)
(blank)
BA1 9KJ [ALT] [RETURN]
Ms T Burnham
etc. etc.
```

Then put a routine as follows in a LocoScript letter where the name and address of the recipient is to go:

```
(+Mail)name(-Mail) [RETURN]
(+Mail)add1(-Mail) [RETURN]
(+Mail)#add2<>"";<:add2(-Mail)
[RETURN]
(+Mail);>:#add3<>"";<:add3(-Mail)
[RETURN]
(+Mail);>:#add4<>"";<:add4(-Mail)
[RETURN]
(+Mail);>:#add5<>"";<:add5(-Mail)
[RETURN]
(+Mail);>:postcode(-Mail)
```

*Now just merge the letter with the address file as usual (i.e. in the disc manager, put the cursor over the letter, press **m**, move the cursor over the address file and [ENTER]). The printouts of each letter will have the name and address nicely closed up.*

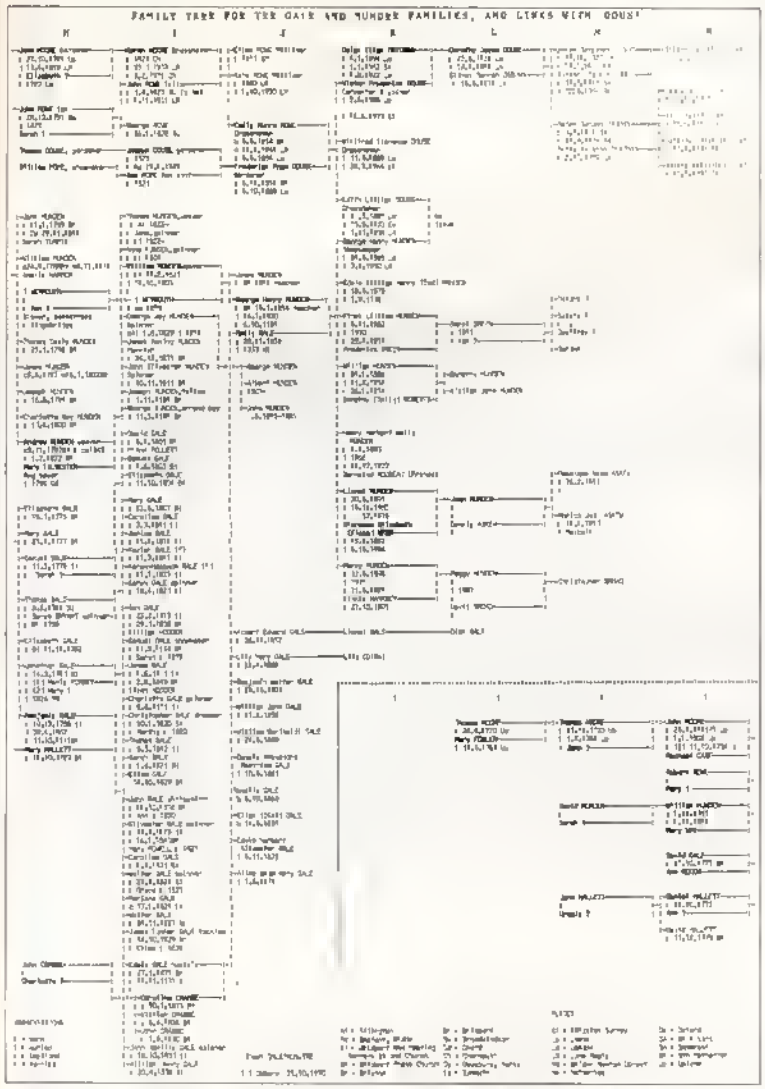
Chart topper

If you're interested in genealogy you can prepare family trees on a PCW9512, thanks to the printer's ability to take very wide paper (up to A4 sideways, or A3). Just set up a document with a layout ([f2], 'change layout') as follows.

Margins 0 and 190
Tabs 27, 54, 81, 108, 135, 162
Pitch 17
Line spacing 8
Paper type A3, 99 lines long

This gives you a capacity of 145 lines of text vertically and 7 generations horizontally. To add to an already nearly full tree may require extensive use of blocks and phrases.

S Osborn, St Albans, Herts



PCW 9512 owners can use the width of the printer to cope with a 7-generation family tree

Memory test

I have a PCW8512 with 512K memory. Micro Design's manual says it can work in high resolution if 512K memory is available, but I get the message 'Needs 512K' if I select high res.

C Botterill, Maidstone, Kent

8000 Plus: Hmm. Micro Design should be able to work in high res on an 8512, so it looks as though you might have a problem.

It sounds like your PCW is an 8256 upgraded with extra memory and a B drive, and that when the chips were added someone forgot to flick the switches inside the machine that tell the PCW it has the extra memory. If you did the upgrade, take the back off the machine and check against the instructions that came with the extra chips that the switches are correctly set.

If you have a genuine 8512 this problem is slightly more puzzling; if it were simply faulty memory connections, you'd get scrambling on part of your screen in Micro Design. If it is an 8512, check when you are loading up CP/M how much memory is indicated as available on the opening message – 110K or 368K. If it says that there is only 110K, your 8512 thinks it's an 8256. The best solution is to take it back if it is under guarantee or get it repaired.. If you're not sure about PCW repair centres in your area, check our *mailorder directory on page 48.*

Cheque it out

In Tipoffs issue 56 Mr Salomon wondered if it was possible to write cheques on his PCW. Of course, normal single cheques can be printed on in LocoScript by setting up an appropriate layout but it is a tricky business aligning a single cheque in the printer and getting the date printed on the cheque as it is too near the top for the bail bar to grip – especially for disabled users, who are the most likely people to want to print cheques on the PCW.

A solution is to persuade your bank to supply cheques on a roll, or better still, sprocket-punched and fan-folded. Big users, such as major firms, use cheques printed and supplied in this form for their salary payments.

Once you have a roll, a simple 'label' layout in LocoScript/ LocoMail can print details in the right place, and because the cheques are on a continuous roll, you don't have to fiddle about aligning a small piece of paper.

JAS Newman, Honiton, Devon

8000 Plus: The four major clearing banks in England tell us that they will consider supplying cheques on a roll to individual customers – though they may take up to six weeks to make up.

New ideas

My PCW 8256, bought five years ago, is on its last legs. The printer hardly works any more and chops the top and bottom of letters off, while the keyboard needs the keys really bashing to make it work. Should I just buy a new PCW, get a new printer and keyboard, or upgrade to another machine?

Rosie Callaghan, Liverpool

8000 Plus: Well, I firmly believe the PCW is the best deal for anyone who mainly wants a word processor, and I wouldn't advise you to upgrade to a different machine unless you have some pressing need. (Pressing needs might include desire to play games, in which case you might go for a Commodore Amiga; necessity of compatibility with IBM type machines, in which case you'd get an inexpensive PC; or a wish to move towards professional desktop publishing, in which case you would consider an Apple Macintosh. All more expensive than a PCW, though, and all require you to buy word processing software and printers).

You can get a reasonable printer (eg. Star LC-10) for £150 or less and Tenchi's excellent keyboard for under £80. You'd need LocoScript 2 to work with a new printer. (See mail order ads in 8000 Plus for all these).

Compare these to prices for a brand new PCW (check out your local Dixons, Currys and so on) – I'm quite sure that your monitor has many years left inside it yet!

Another copy

Can you please explain again how to copy all the LocoScript files from, say, group 5 on disc A to group 4 in B, without having to do them one by one?
John Axon, Cheadle, Cheshire
8000 Plus:1. Switch on the PCW and put in your CP/M startup disc.
2. At the A> type pip [RETURN].
3. When the * appears, remove the CP/M disc and put the source and destination discs for the copy into the drives.
4. Type b:[g4]=a:*.*[g5] [RETURN]

Now you can run up LocoScript or issue another command like that in stage 4. You can substitute other drives or group numbers in the above formula, of course.

One at a time

Is it possible to use LocoSpell to check just a paragraph of a document?
Mary Ward, Ipswich, Suffolk
8000 Plus: No. The only way round is to move that paragraph to the end of the document using [COPY], [CUT] and [PASTE], put the cursor at the beginning of the paragraph, and do a spell check with the 'Just forwards from here' option. Then paste the paragraph back to where it belongs.

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Whether you are using a PCW 9512, 8512 or 8256, the **Printer Support Pack** (£29.95)* gives you everything you need to get the best out of your alternative printer.

To find out more about LocoScript 2 and the **Printer Support Pack**, phone Katy Buchan on: (0306) 740606.

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Key facts No. 34

Teqniche's excellent replacement keyboard for the PCW has keys for $^1/_4$ and $^3/_4$. The manual tells you that they only produce { and } respectively, without telling you that [EXTRA] plus the keys produces the expected fractions. For the convenience of Teqniche owners, here is a key chart showing all the key presses available with it.

Hugh Walton, Oxford

ALL KEY PRESSES (Teqniche PCW 102)

NORMAL	%() 1234567890-=	qwertyuiop[ ]	asdfghjkl;'#	zxcvbnm,./
SHIFT	@() !"£$%'&*()_+	QWERTYUIOP{ }	ASDFGHJKL:@	ZXCVBNM,.?
ALT+SHIFT	{} ¦"¤¢£½¬{}¶¦	¨Ŧ ←ø↓↑{}	ÆÐĐ ŋıĸł ł«	Œ ß ® ŧ Ł↓
ALT	\{} ´"„£Ñ' ¥µº—†	®¢ ←ø↓↑[ ]	æðđ ħ‡ĸł »«	œ © ŋ ł↓/
EXTRA	¼½¾ ©©®®™™©{}	·····¯¯¯¯¯¯¯¯¶¤	¨¨¸¸´´ª±£¦≠	÷×¸¡ˇ°«»
ALT f7+SHIFT	ΔΦΓ Λ≈√∂∞©®™•¶~Ω	ΠΣΘΞΨΩΛΞ]∫∑π%Σ	∃∋⊃∪∨∧⌊⌋√◇○	●■▼▶◀▲×∏◆◆■
ALT f7	ΙΦΔ ΔΔΔΙΔΙΔΔΔΔΩ	ΠΣΘΞΨΩ←]∫Ξπ%	∀∈⊂∩∨∧⌊⌋∂∫∥	○□◆◀◇√∑●▼■
ALT f5+SHIFT	ЄЖЩ !"№?%'«»(	Гъ	ЯШЕРТЫУИОПЖЩ	АСДФГЧЙХЛЬЖЭ	ЭХЦЯБНМ;:1
ALT f5	єЖЩ [234567890гъ	яшяртыуиопжщ	асдфгчйхльжэ	ахцябнм,.1
ALT f3+SHIFT	'"" !"£$%'&*()_+	"ΦΕΡΤΥΘΙΟΠ"'	ΑΣΔΦΓΗΞΚΛ:"»	ΖΧΨΩΒΝΜ,.'
ALT f3	%"' 1234567890-=	"ςερτυθιοπΓΰ	ασδφγηξκλ;'	ζχψωβνμ,./

NOTE :- f1 = normal: Greek: f5 = Cyrillic: f7 = Symbol

The list of key presses as they come out on the Teqniche keyboard for the PCW

Write on

When you start up in CP/M with a self-starting disc, you can't write-protect the disc to prevent corruption or damage (by flicking the write-protect tab on the disc) because during startup the PCW insists on writing a temporary file to the disc, which it erases before it finishes starting up and that A> appears. (This also means you can only have 172K on your disc, not 173K.)

Much more sensible would be for the temporary file to be written to the M drive. Here's how to hack into SUBMIT.COM to make it do so. (This may only work on some versions of CP/M).

Insert a copy of your CP/M master discs side 3 and type **sid** [RETURN]. When the opening message appears replace the disc with your startup disc, the one with SUBMIT.COM on it, type the following:

ra:submit.com [RETURN]
s 02a9 [RETURN]
00 [RETURN]
00 [RETURN]
00 [RETURN]
. [RETURN] (that's a full stop, then [RETURN])
s 0ee8 [RETURN]
0d [RETURN]
. [RETURN]
wa:submit.com [RETURN]

They're zeroes, not letter Os, above. Now you should find that the self-start disc in drive A (or any disc with a copy of this modified SUBMIT.COM) starts up as usual except that you can write-protect it and be safer from corruption/accidental erasure of files etc. You can also put 173K on it.

C McMullen, Gotherington, Cheltenham

```
?
A)sid
CP/M 3 SID - Version 3.0
#ra:submit.com
NEXT MSZE  PC  END
1600 1600 0100 DAFF
#s02a9
02A9 61 00
02AA 73 00
02AB 73 00
02AC 77 .
#s0ee8
0EE8 6E 0d
0EE9 74 .
#wa:submit.com
002Ah record(s) written.
#^C
A>
```

Just a few modifications to SUBMIT.COM can save frustration over lost data and can prevent possible damaged discs later on

Condensed milk

How can I get condensed print output from SuperCalc2?

Peter Hornblower, Blackpool, Lancs

8000 Plus: The answer may be familiar to long-time 8000 Plus readers! Here's what to do.

If you want to change the style of print, give the /O command for 'Output' and as normal choose D or C for 'Display' or 'Contents'. But before hitting P for 'Printer' press S for 'Setup' – you then enter S again for setup codes and keypresses from the following table can be used to change the printout style.

The case is important – to set bold, for example, type [ALT]G and not [ALT]g.

Style	On	Off
Condensed	[ALT]O	[ALT]R
Bold	[EXIT]G	[EXIT]H
Enlarged	[ALT]N	[ALT]T
Italic	[EXIT]4	[EXIT]5
Underline	[EXIT]-1	[EXIT]-0
Pica text	[EXIT]P	
Elite text	[EXIT]M	
Superscript	[EXIT]S0	[EXIT]T
Subscript	[EXIT]S1	[EXIT]T

On some versions of SuperCalc this may not appear to work. This is because SuperCalc is sending a special code to the printer automatically every time you print which overrides the codes you've typed in manually.

The solution is to set this special code to zero so that it doesn't override your manual settings. Use the INSTALL program and select the 'modify printer' option. Select item 8 to change and give zero as the new printer code. Your new SC2 will then accept any of the above codes given manually.

Up the grade

I currently LocoScript version 2.16. What advantages and new features will I get if I buy the latest version?

Nathan Perrin, Fordingbridge

8000 Plus: If you buy LocoFile you get the latest version of LocoScript (2.28 on 8256s or 8512s, 2.29 on 9512s) free. This offers the following features not available on previous versions:

1. Works with LocoFile
2. Two functions for disabled users: a) Option of using double-size screen characters while editing b) 'Sticky shift' option which means eg. you press [ALT] then [PAGE] to go to the top of the page instead of pressing [ALT] [PAGE] simultaneously
3. New functions to LocoSpell: a) ability to add doubtful words automatically to user dictionary instead of stopping at each h) ability to insert dictionaries into documents
4. Extra characters for ancient Greek (breathings, iota subscripts, lunate sigmas etc) 5. Sheet feeder support 6. Quicker LocoChar.

Number please

If you have a list anywhere of telephone numbers stored as a LocoScript document, you can use it to recognise the destinations of calls logged on an itemised British Telecom bill.

Suppose you want to check who the number 0987 654321 belongs to. Edit the document with the phone numbers, press [FIND] and give the number as the text to find. [ENTER] and the entry in the document is found, letting you see whose it is.

Eric Gilbert, Maidstone, Kent

Search me

From time to time we need to search a number of discs with LocoScript files on for files which contain a certain phrase. The only way of doing it seems to be to run LocoScript and search each file individually using [FIND]; is there a quicker way?

A Barclay, West Bridgford, Notts

8000 Plus: It might be possible to write a BASIC program to do this, but I doubt it would be reliable or convenient enough to be workable. PIP has a function that can search for certain specified strings, but it is virtually useless in practice. So the answer is, basically, no.

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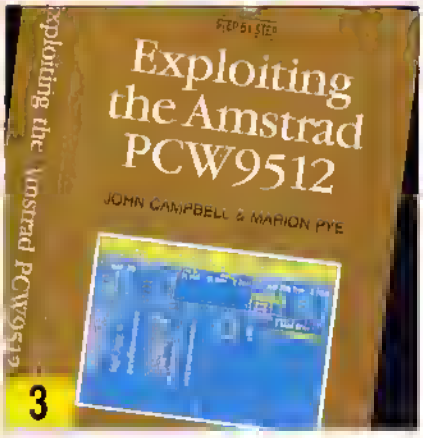

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Written by John Campbell and Marion Pye, this book is aimed at the more experienced user of the 9512. 300 pages, packed with information on programs from Locoscript to Supercalc.2. Highly recommended by the 8000 PLUS team.

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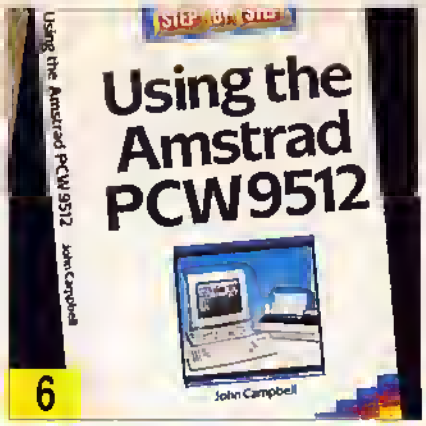

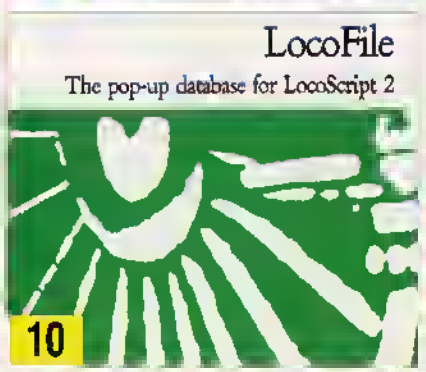

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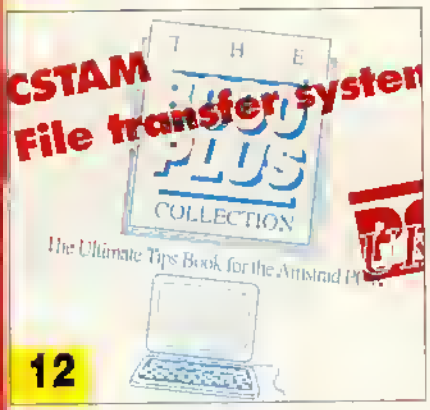

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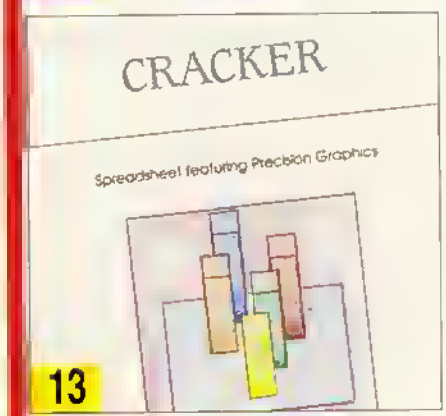

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Postscript

It's Postscript! If you've got something to say, you certainly know where to send it! This month, we've had more furions debate than on an average day in the House of Commons. Two main topics have got your back up – printer support packs and PCW upgrades. And there's more acerbic bits and bobs besides! Keep them coming, to Postscript, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Now off we go!

Fair play

I'm replying to your response to T Morgan's letter (June 1991) about redundancy on printer drivers discs. You ask how other readers feel.

I wonder if this situation has been referred to the Office of Fair Trading. I certainly think it's unfair to have to purchase a lot of what you don't want to get a little of what you do want.

No one person is likely to need lots of printers with one computer; if anything, one is likely to upgrade from a 9-pin to a 24-pin printer, which demands the purchase of another disc from Locomotive - more than just pin money for them! I'm sure it would be more beneficial to Locomotive to run a users club for two or three pounds a year. Printer drivers could be offered as a free service - people don't buy a new printer every week. Software upgrades and new products could be offered directly at a more reasonable price.

When I was looking for a dot matrix printer for my 9512, I decided on a Star LC10. Locomotive said that I'd need a printer drivers disc to get the best out of it. So I bought one but found it did not contain a driver for the LC10 which, I'm told, is possibly the most popular external printer for PCWs. "Use LX800" they said, but it wasn't quite right.

Giving Locomotive their due, when I complained they did come up with an LC10 driver which they supplied free of charge, but the character set wasn't quite right. I tried to create one using the Charkit programme supplied with the disc, but this failed. That was nearly £30 for something which didn't do the job properly, and a badly documented DIY patch-up utility that still came short of the mark. At this point I should say I'm no fool. I am quite computer-literate.

So I've reverted to using the supplied set and am suffering the minor inadequacies like failure to print the "half" symbol (which is in the printer's character set).

Perhaps in defence Locomotive will say that they supply the Charkit program and LocoScript upgrade. But I've not managed to get Charkit to work to my satisfaction, and did I really need the upgrade anyway? Had I bought, say, LocoFile previously, I would already have the latest version. Still let's look on the bright side. I've got a number of spare printer drivers that are no use to me and which I probably can't sell!

Brian Nichols
South Benfleet

8000 Plus: *Yes, a user club is one solution - but, I fear, likely to be rejected by the company on the grounds of all the additional administration and organisation that it is likely to warrant. Unless Locomotive decide to convince us otherwise...*

Fair play II

I feel I have to reply to M Walker's letter published in your May issue, in which they complain about the additional purchase of a printer support pack in order to enable their external printer to function correctly.

The gist of M Walker's letter seemed to be that they almost understood the need for extra printer drivers, but why should they have to buy a whole disc full, if they only need one or two?

Well first of all, how about a lesson in simple business practice? As I understand it, the printer support pack contains some 300-odd printer drivers. What are Locomotive supposed to do, start stocking 300-odd separate printer support discs, each with only one file on them? Does M Walker think this is efficient business practice? Does he or she think that by multiplying their stock and inventory 300-fold, Locomotive would be able to sell the single-file discs for less than 30 quid each? Get serious!

Another gripe mentioned was the potential life-space of the driver files. Well, only Locomotive can answer this one fully, but I would hope that by purchasing and registering the printer support pack, you would automatically be informed of any changes in the content of the pack, and would be allowed to upgrade your existing disc for the usual nominal sum should the new support pack contain files which are of some use.

It also has to be said, that M Walker had better take a long hard look at the 24 pin printer they're about to purchase. My copy of LocoScript 2 came with eleven printer driver files covering a huge range of external printers - all the common ones, in fact. Why isn't this "reasonable priced" 24-pin printer listed amongst them? Is it really such a reasonable price, after all?

Finally, a small whinge of my own. Why do PCW owners always come across as a bunch of penny-pinching cheapskates? We all have to operate within a budget, and welcome any ideas which enable us to save a pound or two here and there, but we really must remember what it is we've bought; the PCW is a brilliant little self-contained machine, which word-processes away to it's heart's content. Thanks to CP/M, it also handles functions which it was never intended to do - spreadsheets, databases, etc... It does all this, and it was a bargain, to boot.

What we must realise though, is that as soon as we leave the cosy little world of the PCW (for example, when connecting faster, more sophisticated external printers, hard discs, etc...), we suddenly enter into the cold hard nasty world dominated by the PC, and in this world, everything - but everything - costs a whole lot more than it does for the PCW.

My advice to M Walker? If you're about to spend near enough the same amount on a new printer as you spent to buy your PCW in the first place, you'd be crazy not to spend the extra £30 to make sure your favourite software works properly.
And we all know the great thing about

advice, don't we? Thanks for a good monthly read.
Peter J Millard
London

8000 Plus: I have to say that however irritating this issue is to many readers, you have probably hit the nail on the head with the 'simple business practice' line of defence. Clearly, the production of individual discs would be an economic and administrative disaster. There is a vicious circle at work here, and I'm not sure how it can be broken. Over to you, Mr Fisher...

Copy cat

I was most interested to read about the perfectly justifiable action taken by Creative Technology when their copyright was violated. However, I think they should warn all purchasers of their ProScan equipment of the changes in copyright which are inherent in the new Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 which is now law.

Before then, if you commissioned a photographer the copyright in the resulting pictures belonged to you, even if you failed to pay your bill! Now, everything is changed and the copyright of any photographs belongs to the photographer unless this copyright is deliberately assigned to another person. Which means that if you copy a photograph, or a reproduction from it, using a ProScan or Masterscan device, you have violated the photographer's copyright and you are subject to the due process of the law. It does not matter than the result is in black and white from a colour original or if the half-tones are lacking, you have still broken the law! Obviously, in the case of wedding pictures the price you pay will probably include the transfer of the copyright, but it need not, so beware!

The same strictures apply to illustrations in books and magazines and the excuse that you 'only wanted it for Jumble Sale leaflet' will attract no sympathy whatsoever. Ignorance of the law is no excuse and purchasers of LPs, CDs and pre-recorded cassettes cannot miss the warning stickers that these products carry so the manufacturers of all scanning devices should fix appropriate labels to their products so that copyright is universally respected. As a judge put it nearly 200 years ago, 'The sweat of a man's brow or the toil of his brain are just as much a man's property as the breeches on his backside!'.
Robert S Williams, FBIPP
Slough

8000 Plus: Now there's a point. Not sure about sweat and backsides, but I await a deluge in response!

Sowr grapes?

You asked for comments about Mike Maber's letter in which he suggests that instead of upgrading our PCWs by using hardware additions, we would be better advised to sell our sow's ear and purchase a ready-made silk purse (a PC).

He seems to miss the point that the PCW is probably the most versatile machine presently available: the owner can simply use it as a remarkably inexpensive word processor and computer for basic needs; or can add options as required for particular purposes - selecting these options from a wide range of products to obtain exactly the desired result with minimum cost and no unwanted 'extras'.

Mike Maber seems to think that we should purchase a £1,300 'PC 80286' - and make the best of its in-built and supplied facilities, whether they suit us or not. (Although I understand that other hard/software is also available to upgrade THAT sow's ear, which brings him back to where he started!)

He finishes his letter with a comparison - 'would I spend money to upgrade my Morris Minor, instead of buying a new Ferrari'? Apart from the cost, the simply answer is that I would fit a roof-rack to carry the extra load. (And perhaps it is not so easy to add a roof-rack to a Ferrari?...)
Chris Shipp
Kingsbridge

8000 Plus: The roof rack analogy is a good one, and I tend to agree with all that you have said. It all comes back to the 'take it or leave it' philosophy which I referred to last month. Buying a PC does, as you so rightly indicate, open up a family sized can of financial worms. I'd rather stay put and enhance the machine that I've got if I feel the need.

Unbelievable!

Tell me it's not true? Just read the Postscript pages of issue 57 June, and could not believe a letter from a Mr Mike Maber of Weymouth, Complaining about the recent upsurge in Hardware add-ons and software improvements for the PCW family.

Agreed, to take the PCW to its full (present) potential, would cost in excess of £1,000 and bring the price to the equivalent of a 286/386sx AT IBM Clone. But surely Mr Maber, the £1,300 you quote is only the start of your outlay on the PC market, not counting the cost of a printer and certainly not taking into account the cost of PC software. The so called 'Industry Standard' programs for word processing, databases, DTP, spreadsheets etc cost anything from £300-£800 plus. Yes there are cheaper alternatives, but if you want to exploit your computer to its full potential, that's a bit like using the old 2 star grade of petrol in a Rolls Royce, it might work but hardly like it should.

Another point to consider before 'upgrading' is the volatility of the PC market, the XT series of machines now appear to be in their death throes as indicated by Amstrad's decision to cease production of its 1512 and 1640 models. With the ever increasing processor speeds and more and more software houses jumping on the WINDOWS band wagon, this will mean that owners of XT machines will have to rely on PD or Shareware for programs or upgrades with very little technical support. The next in line for the chop will certainly be the 286 series of machines.

The simple message of this, is that all PCW owners should go down on hended knee and give thanks to the Great Silicon Chip, that they have a machine which is both still in production and well supported by Hardware manufacturers and Software Houses.

Fair enough, Mr Maber, if you don't want to move on, but I'm certainly one who'd rather have a silk purse from the sow's ear I know best. MS-DOS? WINDOWS??
Dave Jones
Birchover

8000 Plus: Thanks, Dave

Cheer up!

If, when intending to use LocoScript 2 on my PCW 9512, I inadvertently load the files data disc before my LocoScript Start-of-Day disc, the machine squeaks at me four times, then goes into a sulk. There then seems to be no way of loading LocoScript or any other program without first switching off.

I realise that the best way to avoid this problem is to check that I have put the right disc in the first time, but having got into this state, is there any keyboard action I can take to get the machine out of its state of suspended animation? The combination of EXTRA, SHIFT and EXIT doesn't work. I can always sort it out by switching off and on again, but there must be a more elegant way?
Paul Hickley
Reading

8000 Plus: Yes. The answer lies with the space bar, oddly enough; the keyboard effectively locks unless you tap it to tell it that the correct disc is now in the drive waiting to be read. Simple enough - but why on earth it isn't made clearer, I don't know! Hope this helps.

Up and running

My wife and I both use our PCW 9512 intermittently during the day and are apt to switch it off between uses.

However I notice that the manual advises against switching off when re-booting and says that using {SHIFT} [EXTRA] "causes less strain on the electronics". Is this because it is not advisable to switch off and then on

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quickly or is it better to leave the machine on (? with a dimmed screen brightness) throughout the working day? Naturally we want our invaluable PCW to last as long as possible and, for us, it is not important to save re-booting time; coffee can be drunk then!
Peter S Johnson
Wimborne

8000 Plus: *The reason that the manufacturers advise you to use [SHIFT][EXTRA][EXIT] is, as you mention, related to speed. If you carry out this operation too frequently, and don't leave a gap between switching off then back on, you are in danger of committing the deadly crime known as 'blowing the chip'. However, it sounds as though you are simply switching off, and then switching it back on after a period of time. This should not harm the PCW. Equally, if you do decide to leave the machine on throughout the working day, you will not upset those electronics; the 8000 Plus PCWs are always on, and seem to suffer no ill effects whatsoever. Overall, I think the best rule is to switch on at the beginning of your working day, use [SHIFT][EXTRA][EXIT] to re-boot with different programs and hit the decisive off switch at the end of the day!*

Help!

I have 2 broken B drives. I have not been successful in repairing them and repair centres say they do not repair Amstrad PCW B drives. I need either to get one of them back in working order or get a cheap second hand 8512 B or 9512. If you can help phone Dominique on 071-231 8730 (London-Rotherhithe). I would be very grateful. Thank you in anticipation.
Dominique Lemars
London

8000 Plus: *Can anyone help?*

Good relations

Are you really a sub-division of Creative Technology? You certainly give the impression that you are.

I refuse to believe that you cannot find anything to criticise in Micro Design 2 (MD2). Unfortunately, I believed you and bought MD2 to use for DeskTop Publishing (DTP).

The only DTP program I'd used previously was Newsdesk by the Electric Studio, but your glowing reports of how marvellous MD2 was forced me to discard Newsdesk as old hat. What a mistake that was.

The pull-down menu system of Newsdesk is far superior to the MD2 version. (Why does MD2 insist on calling a 'move' function 'copy'?). As for MD2s instruction manual... I've never seen such dross. No wonder Nik Holmes from MD2 gets so many calls!

His article in April highlights the problem. He states that Creative Technology "...receives 30-50 calls every day from nearly ten thousand users...". Now I make that 30,000 to 50,000 calls in Plain English. He obviously doesn't mean that, but the MD2 manual suffers from the same convoluted language problem, and I've never seen such a ridiculous numbering system — it looks as if the program was rushed out and any quirks that were discovered were then banged into the Appendix sections.

Most people buying MD2 want a simple method of newsletter production, with the capability of jazzing up the newsletter with some graphics. MD2 will certainly do this, but where in your reviews does it tell you that, using a 24-pin printer, it can take up to 30 mins to produce a single page in MD2? If you assume a 6-page edition, we are talking 3 hours for printing alone, never mind the text and graphics handling. This is a major flaw.

The graphics look superb on screen, but often are too dark on printout - another waste of time. Why doesn't the program default to autoflow "on", instead of "off"? (This ruined 90 mins work one evening). When copying from left to right, it is far too easy to hit the "Undo" key. All of these are flaws, yet none are mentioned by you. Why not? I do like many of the features of MD2 and it is very powerful, but it most certainly ISN'T as perfect as you pretend.
Colin McAllister
Westwoudside

8000 Plus: Thanks for your letter Colin. No, we're not a sub-division of CT; the reason that we assume such support for MD2 is because we do genuinely think that it is a good program. When you come across a software company who produce good, solid products at realistic prices, you have hit upon a precious commodity. CT are such a company, and, given that they also provide extensive after sales support, then we're quite happy to endorse the excellent products which they release. It just so happens that they haven't released anything which could be described as sub-standard yet; if they do you can be sure that they will not be spared from the reviewers wrath! I don't accept that we 'pretend' that MD2 is 'perfect'; no program has that lofty status. There are flaws in every one, including MicroDesign, and we are quite aware of that. However, I take your comments, and pass the gauntlet over to Mr Holmes!

Message from above

Spotted on 'Through the Keyhole', (I.T.V., 10.5.91.)., an Amstrad 8512 in David Icke's study...

"Could this be David's direct line with the great I.B.M. in the sky?", we ask. Possibly, this could explain the shouts of "Oh God!!" that can often be heard emanating from the direction of my work station at home. Can I claim exemption from the Poll Tax because my office has now become a Place of Worship? My wife swears that I idolised my 8512.

P.S. Can we claim V.A.T. back on 'Religious Artefacts'?
Reverend (?) Roger Blake
Hindhead

8000 Plus: *Tut tut! You should be defrocked! Thanks for your letter, Radge.*

Come on!

Re: Innocent until..? - June p.85
You say, 'The laws [on copying and transferring computer programmes] .. are none to clear'. Surely not. As a layman I believe the law is both simple and clear but some program publishers do not make it clear. 'NO PART OF THIS BOOK OR ACCOMPANYING MAGNETIC MEDIA MAY BE REPRODUCED BY ANY MEANS WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF..' takes up one page in the front of one DTP manual (not MicroDesign 2). 'Any backup copy made is the sole use of the purchaser of the original discs. Any further use by outside persons is an infringement of copyright and will be met with appropriate legal action.' is found in the section 'Getting Started': or should it be 'Getting Stopped'? Does this mean I am allowed to sell the original discs and manual? I think not. It would take an article to explain why!

Compare buying your car and its road fund licence with a program for your PCW. You 'own' the car and its licence but you do not 'own' the program. You, the original buyer, are only 'licenced to use' the program.

With the road fund licence the one car is licenced to be used on the road by any owner of the car. With the computer program the buyer is licenced to use the program on one PCW s/he uses. You may sell or give away you car with its licence: not so your computer with its program.

The computer program is a licence for the life of the buyer: with updated (='outdating'!) the gratitude is limited. I do not think you can bequeath programs in your will. To protect executors, and 'X', maybe my will should include, 'I bequeath my beloved Joyce to 'X' but all my computer programs and their manuals that I was licenced to use must be buried [cremated] with my mortal remains.'. Aha! Is 'X' allowed to inherit the original LocoScript 1, etc. bundled with Joyce?

I am willing to supply any program publishers with a layman's Plain English explanation for their manuals.
Christopher J Whitmey
Fownhope

8000 Plus: *Thank you so much!*

Cricket fans!

● **High Score** keeps your side's scores through the season, up to 150 players in 150 matches. You can then print out performances for any player in each match; list the highest scores and best bowling performances; list each person's high scores; produce batting averages; and produce bowling averages tabulated by runs per wicket, runs per over or deliveries per wicket – all for one type of match (League, One Day) or all types. All these can be printed out, shown on screen, or sent to LocoScript – great for newsletters! High Score is easy to use and *fast*. £19.95 + £1 p&p

● **Scorecard** is the PCW version of those electronic scoreboards that keep the score on TV. Enter the result of each ball and the PCW shows the score card, the bowling analysis, calculates run rates and runs required rates, and can print out the details in anything from summary to ball-by-ball analysis. It will also print out scoring charts for any batsman showing the path of each shot. 8000 Plus rated it 19/20 value for money! £19.95 (without scoring chart, £14.95) + £1 p&p

● Both work on all PCWs, though Scorecard's scoring chart facility won't work on a 9512. £5 off if you order both programs. From *Sticky Dog Software, 46 Avondale Road, Bath BA1 3EG.*

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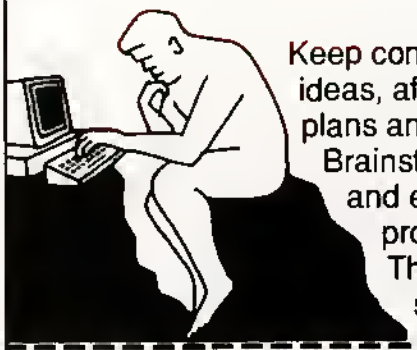

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Competition

Find the PCW-related words below and you could win a fabulous 3.5" internal drive for your PCW!

Win!

Let your PCW do the talking - to a PC, with the help of a 3.5" internal drive!

The quest for communication is one which has preoccupied civilisation since time began. Every development, from cave paintings to satellite beams, proves beyond doubt that man was made to contact others.

So, how does this facet of evolution relate to the PCW? The influence is clearly in evidence; communications technology allows your PCW to 'talk' to its peers via modems, fax machines and the host of subsidiary hard and software related to those mediums.

However, one area which is becoming increasingly pertinent to the business of communications is the PCW's ability to converse with its infamous elder brother, the PC. The need arises chiefly in the classic situation of home versus work; or, as seems to be the case more and more, PCW versus PC. It can be frustrating to constantly switch between the two different machines; to leave work, and have to re-start a project in a new format, with new software, and a completely different operating code.

There are three solutions to the problem. The first is to fit a 5.25" external drive to the PCW. This means that documents can be prepared on the PCW, and, with the help of what could best be described as 'interpreting' software, prepare them for storage and exchange in a PC format on the larger disc. The second is to repeat the very same procedure with an external 3.5" drive – the size of the drive which you select should correspond with that present on the PC you will be in contact with.

The third option is to dispense with matters external altogether, and fit the 3.5" drive to the PCW internally. This means that you can have all the means of communications with the PC embodied in one user-friendly machine – a marriage of convenience of the most respectable kind.

And that is where Cumbria-based Silicon City come in. The company produce the very drive we are talking about – and this month's fully illustrated guide on page 45 shows you just how to install it safely into your PCW.

Forget initial qualms about space shortage and PCW-butchering – the process is perfectly harmless and, dare we boast, easy to carry out!

Each machine in the PCW range has a slightly different drive and installation procedure. Last month, we covered the procedure for the 9512, this month its the turn of the 8256, and in August we will be looking at the 8512.

That's why our special competition comes at the perfect time for those of you who are thinking of adding an internal drive. Silicon City have generously donated a 3.5" drive for this month's prize. All you have to do to is to discover the six PCW-related words hidden in the square opposite, send your answer in on a postcard, and keep everything crossed on 25th August when the winner is pulled from the hat!

Remember to state your machine type, and then post your answers to 8000 Plus, Drive Competition, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2AP.

The words, by the way, are arranged forwards, backwards, and diagonally in either form just to make it really difficult! Good luck!

X	S	K	A	Y	H	E	F
R	O	T	I	N	O	M	I
P	R	S	C	A	D	O	D
R	E	T	N	I	R	P	R
D	O	G	S	O	F	C	I
I	P	C	K	M	M	W	V
S	O	F	T	W	A	R	E
K	M	L	P	R	U	H	S

NEXT MONTH!

Matter of Fax

Tearing your hair out over your fax machine? Can't get it to work with your PCW? Worry no more. Next month, we iron out many of the problems which you've brought to light in your letters. So, if you're in a fix with a fax, stand by!

The Write Lines

If freelance writing is your line of work, you'll be well aware of the problems involved with circulating your work for publication. Did you send that feature to the Evening Echo or the Morning Star? What was the response? Next month, the editor of a science fiction magazine gives you some useful hints and tips to help you become more organised in your approach to submitting freelance work. And, there's even a special section on how to incorporate LocoFile into the proceedings! Don't miss next month's feature!

SuperCalc Surgery

Popular though it is, SuperCalc is one of the more troublesome spreadsheets when it comes to deciphering the basics. Fret no more, for help is at hand in next month's 8000 Plus. We've a special feature on how to carry out a simple monitor of domestic expenditure using Supercalc, aimed especially at the newcomer to the program. So, if your books need balancing but SuperCalc has put you in a spin, a month's wait will certainly pay off!

Accounting for...

If you're in need of an accounts program which is truly friendly – and won't break the bank, August's issue has a treat in store. Codex Accounts is just the program for first timers – so don't forget to invest in next month's issue of 8000 Plus!

The August issue of

8000 PLUS

is on sale on July 25th.

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*8256	Fabric colours	2741Col	£4.95	Band C
8256	Multistrike films	2741MS	£3.95	Band B

8256 ribbons also suit the 8512

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9512	Fabric LONGLIFE	2746LL	£4.95	Band C
*9512	Fabric colours	2746Col	£4.95	Band C
9512	Multistrike films	2746MS	£3.95	Band B

Multistrike films are the kind supplied with new 9512's but FABRIC ribbons can be used with Re-inK, to further increase the printing life of the ribbon.

LIFETIMES: Multistrike Films 100K chars
Fabric std 400K chars
* Fabric LONGLIFE 750K chars

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Home Entertainment Centre	£20.95	MicroDesign 2 + Mouse & I/F	£89.95
Knife Plus	£18.95	Mini Office Professional	£29.95
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LocoScript & Spell Combo	£37.95	Protext Word Processor	£59.95
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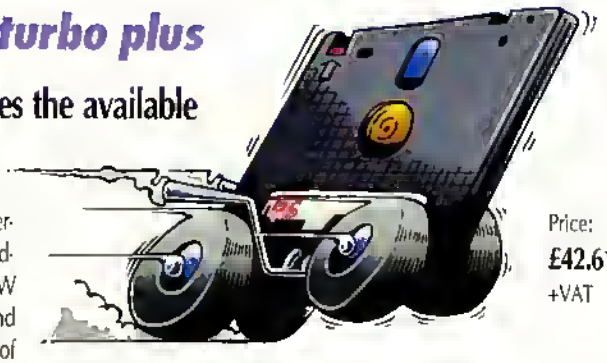

Price: **£42.61** +VAT

Cracker 2 turbo plus is the powerful, user friendly graphics spreadsheet specially written for the PCW 8256, 8512 and 9512. Fast and easy to use, with a wide variety of graph styles, why settle for a text-only spreadsheet when the best costs less?

Cracker 2 turbo plus is capable of checking entries for error as data is keyed into a work sheet. Arithmetic, logic and syntax are all checked before being accepted.

Once a worksheet has been created Cracker 2 turbo plus can translate these figures into graphs, in high resolution, either on the screen or to an Epson compatible printer. Bar graphs, pie charts, line graphs, logarithmic, scatter and hi lo graphs can all be produced.

Built-in functions are available for doing statistical analysis, complex logic and higher mathematics. Special functions for cashflow calculations and tax assessments are also provided.

- Cracker 2 turbo plus supports 52 columns by 255 rows
- Makes full use of the PCW 32 line screen
- Extensive graphing capabilities
- On-line help and error checking

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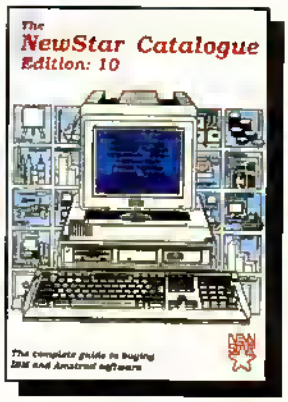

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Hello!

Welcome to July's 8000 Plus! I think that there is probably one word which springs to mind as I write - and that is printers. We've been surrounded by the things for a month, and in a small office, that is quite a significant limitation on space. Imagine if you had five fairly bulky machines at your work station; you can very easily lose sight of your desk for a few days! However, space constraints aside, there was a very good reason for having all this equipment in the office, which will be revealed if you turn to page 10 of this issue. The feature was devised in response to several subscriber's letters, so it really does prove that if there is enough support for an idea, it will come to fruition in the magazine!

The problem with external printing seems to be that not enough is explained about how to convince various software packages to co-operate with the external printers on the market. It's all very well connecting your printer to the PCW, but there is no further explanation about compatibility. This situation is unbelievably frustrating, especially if you've spent several hundred pounds on your purchase. What we've tried to do this month is to show you how to get to grips with your printer, and how to make sure that it communicates effectively with the PCW. We've answered as many of your questions as possible, and hopefully you'll come away understanding a little more about the theory - and the practice - of external printing!

If you haven't got an external printer, there's still plenty more for you to enjoy in July's 8000 Plus. We've had a fantastic new product in for review from SCA Systems; called Pro8256, it is a superb performance booster for (you guessed it!) the PCW8256. It adds instant extra memory, and also provides two ports for the back of the machine, so that you can add extras without having to make inconvenient decisions about priority. Continuing the 8256 theme, we've also looked at how to install an internal 3.5" drive to the machine - and you have the chance to win one (whatever model you own) in this month's competition.

Postscript has been the forum for some quite furious debate this month, so why not have a read through, and send me *your* views! Remember to code-mark your envelope SL so that I can give your letter priority over the rest.

Just one more thing; many of you have ordered the 8000 Plus Guide to Micro Design, details of which are given on page 36 of this month's issue. I've had a number of letters and telephone calls from people who haven't yet received their copy. The message is, don't panic; the book missed its 'slot' at the printers, and we have been allocated a new date for publication. If you have ordered it, it will be with you within a couple of weeks. Please accept my apologies for the delay, and hold on for a little longer. As they say, the best things in life are worth waiting for, and that is never more true than in this case! That's all for now; I hope you enjoy July's 8000 Plus, and I look forward to receiving more of your letters over the coming weeks!

Sophie

Sophie Lankenau
Editor, 8000 Plus

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